

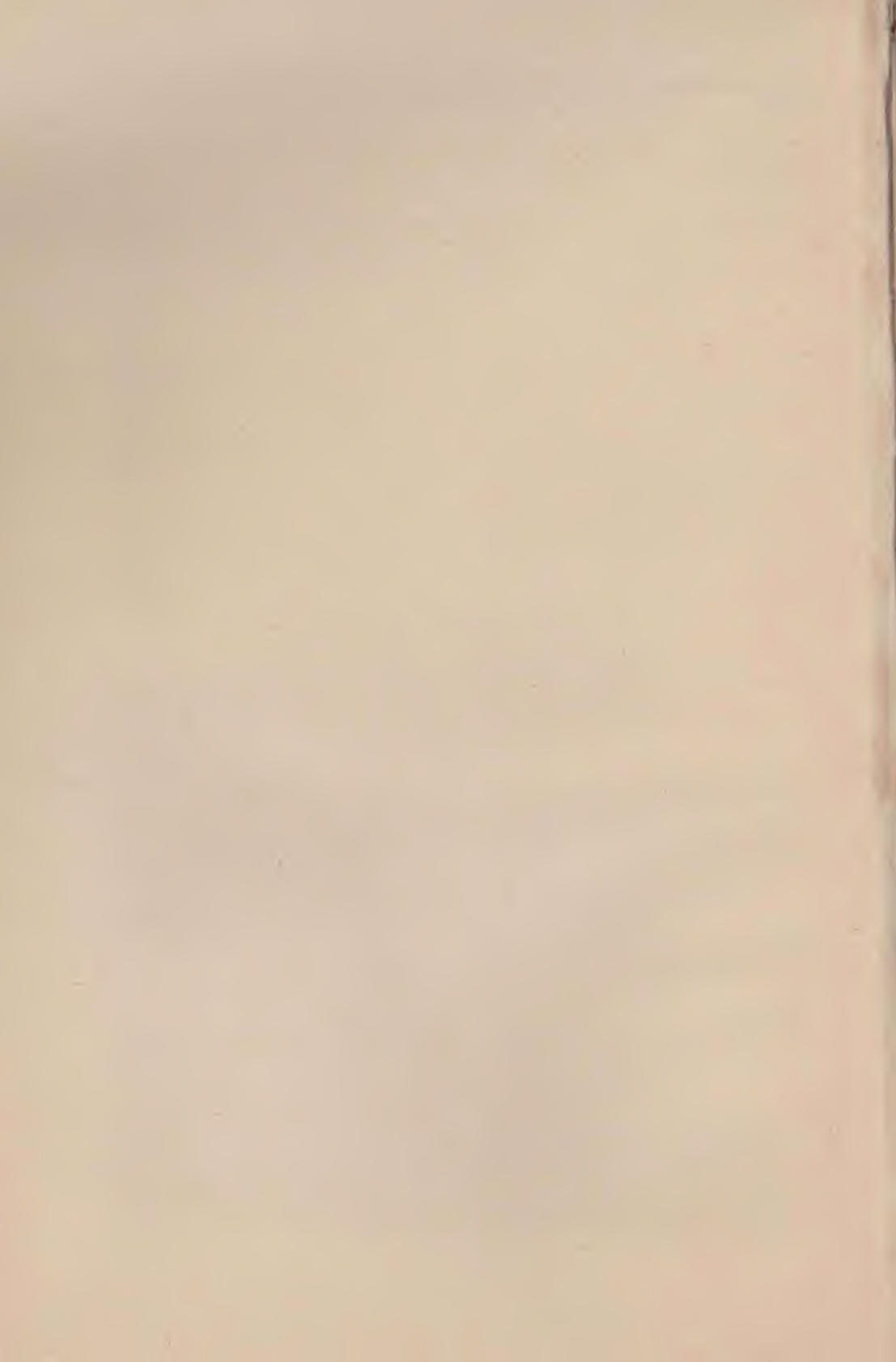
# Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru



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Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru







**Selected  
works of  
Jawaharlal  
Nehru**



AT SIMLA, JULY 1945

# **Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru**

Volume Fourteen

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## FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling — these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil

liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

*Indira Gandhi.*

New Delhi  
18 January 1972

Chairman  
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund



## EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume begins with the release of Jawaharlal on 15 June 1945. Though confident that the end of the raj was near, Jawaharlal did not, whatever the British proposals and assurances, envisage an immediate transfer of power. He justified the August movement, warned of upheavals throughout the country, applauded the role of the Indian National Army and sought to resist the forces which threatened Indian unity. He also raised his voice in support of all nations struggling for freedom and thought in terms of an Asian federation and a new world order.

The Simla Conference convened by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, at the end of the war, was allowed by him to collapse because of his unwillingness to stand up to Jinnah. Thereafter came the elections to the Central and provincial assemblies. On 19 February 1946, the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, announced that a Cabinet Mission would be going out to India.

Much of the material of this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. The cooperation extended by the Nehru Memorial Library is acknowledged. J.N. Correspondence refers to his letters in 120 bound volumes; some other letters of his in the Nehru Memorial Library are referred to as belonging to the J.N. Papers. Shrimati Indira Gandhi has made available to us Jawaharlal's letters to her. The National Archives of India and the Maharashtra Government have authorised the utilisation of material in their possession. *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Tribune*, *The Leader*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *The Statesman*, *The Times of India* and *The Hindu* have allowed us to reprint the texts of speeches and statements first published by them. The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, has permitted the reprint of extracts from six items in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Volume VI. The India Office Library has allowed us to reproduce two extracts from R.G. Casey's diary. One letter has been taken from the Palme Dutt Papers in the office of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The text of one interview has been reproduced with the permission of the Archives on Contemporary History in the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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# SIMLA CONFERENCE AND AFTER



## 1. First Thoughts on Coming Out of Jail<sup>1</sup>

I am coming out of jail after 1,041 days. During this period I have been cut off from the outside world, which is now bewildering to both the eye and the mind. You will be surprised to hear that till this moment I do not know what Lord Wavell has said in his broadcast last night. But even if I know its contents it is unfair to expect me to comment on it so soon.

My first thoughts on coming out of prison are with those who are still rotting in prison.<sup>2</sup> My colleagues and myself had been completely cut off from them so long as we were in Ahmadnagar. That is why we welcomed the idea of repatriation to our provinces. My long journey from Ahmadnagar to Bareilly, with a halt at Naini Central Prison on the way, enabled me to meet some of the old comrades and catch a few glimpses of what they have suffered and what the province has gone through during the last three gruesome years.

Against this grim background of suffering and humiliation it is not a matter for any rejoicing that eight members of the Congress Working Committee have come strutting out of prison. It is a matter for shame and sorrow that so many of our comrades are still behind prison walls. Their sufferings, unlike mine, have not hit the headlines. The world tends to forget them. That is why I want to pay homage to those unknown Congress soldiers, who have borne the brunt of the struggle.

My anguished thoughts also go to the hunted men who are being chased from pillar to post. Recently, there has been a case in Almora court in which an Englishwoman<sup>3</sup> was punished for organising humanitarian relief for the distressed families of these men. I gave up legal

1. Speech at Almora at a reception given soon after his release, 15 June 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 17 June and *The Hindustan Times*, 17 June 1945.

2. When the Viceroy announced on 14 June 1945 the release of the members of the Congress Working Committee, he left those who were still in jail in consequence of the 1942 disturbances, to the consideration of the new Central Government and provincial governments. According to official sources 6,127 people were in detention as on 1 September 1945.

3. C.M. Heilmann, also known as Sarla Devi, came to India in January 1932 and worked in various educational institutions. She was living in a Gandhi ashram in Almora district in 1942. For helping the families of certain absconders, she was jailed for one year in 1944.





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practice long ago, so I cannot pronounce a court judgment on the case. But there are certain things which are bigger than law. One of them is the law of human sympathy. If any law prevents me from doing my human duty to the poor and the distressed, then I say, to hell with this law and its makers. If any of you are frightened by this law from doing this duty, then I say, to hell with you. If the British think that by keeping us in jail for three years they have broken our spirit, they are sadly mistaken. I say again they are sadly mistaken.

I am not concerned with what these men have done. Whatever they have done, it is a savage thing to seek to make their families suffer for their wrongs. There are all sorts of savages. There are savages who do not admit they are savages. There are those who make brazen-faced admission of their savagery, and those who are enforcing or promulgating this savagery, also fall in the latter category. It shows to what depths of human degradation they have fallen. It also shows to what they owe their position in this country.

I do not fully know what has happened during the last three years. But I have heard a little about it and have felt and thought about it. There are certain things I do not like and certain other things I do like. I am not prepared to give you this story at this moment, nor am I going to sit in judgment on its *dramatis personae*, but I am prepared to say this that those who acted for the love of their country, however much they may have erred, will always have a place in my heart. They will always have shelter in my house. They are welcome to Anand Bhawan.

I pay my homage to those who are playing with their lives and those who are now at the door of death. Among them, it is only in the fitness of things that I must take the name of one of India's brave women, Aruna Asaf Ali. If my voice can reach her, I want to send her my love and esteem. I want to tell her that whatever she has done shall not be wasted and will bear fruit. It will leave its impression on her countrymen.

In the revolutionary world in which we are living it will not help to lie in fear or to swerve to the other extreme of boasting and bullying. You must have yourselves seen during the last three years that our national struggle needed a new kind of technique than mere shouting of slogans and spectacular processions. I hope that after the experience of these gruesome years, more wisdom and more iron have entered India's soul.



## 2. Objectives and Aims<sup>1</sup>

After nearly three years of isolation, it is obviously difficult for me to issue a message or give my views on the national or international situation. During this period, vast and revolutionary changes have taken place all over the world and in India. Those changes are obvious enough, in the war situation as well as in the far-reaching effects of the war. Yet, perhaps, changes are the greatest in the minds of men everywhere. From these minds I have been cut off, and all I could do is to observe the reactions of my own mind to the events that have taken place. In India, in spite of seeming stagnation in the political field, I have no doubt that our people have been powerfully affected by what they have gone through during these gruesome years. I must come in contact with my own people and with co-workers before I can venture to say anything. But I know this that, whatever changes take place, internal or external, the fundamental objectives and principles remain the same.

For us in India, these objectives can be stated as Indian independence and freedom, within the large context of the freedom and cooperation of other nations and peoples. Neither of them can be isolated from the other. I do not think that Indian independence can function by itself in a world where domination of one nation by another continues. Nor do I think it conceivable that any stable world order can be evolved unless the 400 millions of India are really free. Freedom for India cannot, and should not, mean freedom of a few at the top, but must mean democratic and economic freedom and equality of our 400 millions.

For us, political and economic freedom are intertwined as they are in every other country. The terrible tragedy of the Bengal famine, as ghastly, if not more so, as anything that has happened in the war, is not only the final judgment on British rule in India, but is also the death warrant of the economic order which produces such tragedies.

We can never forget in India all that our people have suffered in the past, especially during these three years. But at the same time, we may not allow our sentiments to run away with us and cloud our vision about the future. I remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi on that

1. Interview to the press, Almora, 15 June 1945. *The Hindu*, 17 June 1945.

fateful evening of August 8: "Though the eyes of the world are blood-shot, we must keep calm and clear-eyed."<sup>2</sup>

In the world of today, there appears to be much that fills one with despair, but there is also ground for hope that passion for freedom exists in every country. If we in India are passionately attached to our freedom, we are equally concerned that all other countries or classes, who have been exploited or deprived of their freedom, should achieve their freedom.

With all freedom-loving people of the world, we shall always cooperate for their good, as well as care for the larger good of the world as a whole.

2. In his address to the A.I.C.C. meeting after it had passed the August Resolution, Mahatma Gandhi had said: "You have to stand against the whole world although you have to stand alone. You have to stare the world in the face, although the world may look at you with blood-shot eyes. Do not fear...."

### 3. The Need for Drastic Changes<sup>1</sup>

Five days ago I passed through Ranikhet as a prisoner escorted by policemen, and today I pass through the town, apparently a free man. The change is not very great and I do not rejoice in it. I cannot, of course, say that I am sorry to be out of prison. Birds cannot love their cages and free men want to live freely. That is why India herself is restless.

For three years we have had a terrible movement. I do not fully know what happened all this time and I am now slowly getting to know the story. Till I have known it I am not prepared to sit in judgment on the movement.

I am also not in a position to judge the Wavell offer. I have not yet read it and even if I have, it would be unfair to give my view without holding counsel with my colleagues.

But there are certain fundamentals of the national struggle to which I want to draw your attention. We are living in a time of war and revolution. One war has just finished and another is still going on. Bigger things are hidden behind the screen of this war. Vast and revolutionary changes are taking place and neither the victor nor the vanquished knows what will happen next. India, too, cannot escape these revolutionary times nor does she want to.

1. Speech at Ranikhet, 17 June 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 19 June 1945.



Whatever may be the apparent strength of other countries, the really great countries in the world are four, two, out of which, are India and China. Despite the intellectual and material wealth of the first two countries, what is the condition of India and China? What is the condition of India and her people?

You have only to remember the grim tragedy of the Bengal famine. No indictment will be too strong on a government which let this happen. But I am tired of repeating the crimes of the British raj. I am angry with the role of a section of our own people in this gruesome drama. While men were dying like flies on the streets of Calcutta, rich Europeans and Indians were feasting and dancing in restaurants, and while railway wagons were needed to carry food, they were being used to carry horses for races.

Many people have amassed fortunes during this war and I do not grudge them their prosperity. But I will certainly denounce the profits made at the cost of millions of human lives. What is the result? Besides the millions who have died, millions of children are going to have their growth stunted and millions of lives are going to be damaged irreparably.

Sending merely fifteen men to the Executive Council will not solve the problem. If that were enough we could have long ago secured these positions. However, I am not judging here the Wavell offer.

India needs a surgical operation. We have to get rid of our pre-occupation with petty problems and concentrate on the fundamental problem of slavery and poverty. That is the touchstone on which every new offer has to be tested.

#### 4. Refusal to Comment on Wavell Plan<sup>1</sup>

I remind you that many are still in jails, some for over 15 years, almost forgotten by the press and the public. They symbolise the nation. At this grave hour we can reasonably expect their release.

1. Speech at Nainital, 17 June 1945. Based on reports from *The Statesman*, 19 June and *The Hindu*, 20 June 1945.

I would ask you to have patience until the Working Committee has considered the Wavell proposals. Moreover, President Maulana Azad is the only competent person to express any opinion on behalf of the Congress and it is not fair for the members of the Working Committee to express their individual opinions. I read the Wavell proposals only last night and I have had no time to ponder over their implications. Besides, isolation in jail has kept me out of touch with the events of the outside world and I want to study things presently at first hand. When, however, the time comes I shall unhesitatingly express my opinion.

The moral fabric of the present Government has completely rotted. Unless the whole political, economic and administrative system is overhauled the evils of corruption and bribery cannot be fought. A few men at the top, however honest and good they may be, cannot remedy the evils which are eating into the vitals of the country. The good men are either in jail or sitting at home because they cannot toe the Government line.

The grim tragedy of the Bengal famine is the darkest spot in British rule in India. When the streets of Calcutta were littered with the dead, the favoured few danced and dined and lived a life of gaiety; while wagons were needed to bring food to Bengal, they were used to transport horses for the Calcutta races. The conduct of our countrymen who indulged in blackmarketing and profiteering at the time of this crisis is not less shameful. The remedy lies not merely in supplying food but also in rooting out the present economic and political system.

I refer to the conviction of Miss Heilmann, who has been given a jail sentence for helping the families of political sufferers. Even under the rules of warfare, the men, women and children of fighting forces are not victimised. But here a lady has been convicted for helping families of political sufferers. In this war human considerations have been thrown to the winds. I do not know how to condemn the Government, its laws and courts of justice, which victimised the families of political workers. Hitler revived the barbarous practice of having hostages to suit his ends.<sup>2</sup> What difference is there between Hitler and these men, who have prevented help to the families of political workers to coerce the politicals into submission? To help the suffering is a normal human desire. But the Government has stooped to the lowest depths in punishing those who rendered such help.

2. The sabotage activities of resisters in German-occupied countries provoked Hitler to reprisals including the shooting of hostages.

Though I have painted a dark picture, I am not a pessimist. Swaraj will bring peace and happiness and we shall have the pleasure of building this fine edifice with our own effort.

## 5. The Martyrs of 1942<sup>1</sup>

It was with pain that I learnt of the suffering of the people of Allahabad in those fateful days of August 1942. As a matter of fact, I was ashamed of myself being in prison. But there was no way out. I could not have jumped out of the walls of the Ahmadnagar Fort. Thousands of pictures then haunted me.

Today, when I am again in your midst, receiving your affectionate welcome, these dormant thoughts are revived. I do not know all the details of those incidents but whatever they may be, whether my countrymen were right or wrong, I bow my head in honour of the dauntless martyrs, who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the country. I also salute those youngmen who fought and are still fighting for the same noble cause. I congratulate them. I pay my respect to them. Long live their valour. Long live their martyrdom.

I have heard of the glorious deeds and the many sufferings of the people of the districts of Ballia,<sup>2</sup> Azamgarh<sup>3</sup> and Gorakhpur.<sup>4</sup> I pay my warm tributes to them. Their sufferings, their sacrifices and bravery will constitute a chapter by itself in the history of our struggle.

While it is true that thousands have died, it is also true that many have shamefully kept themselves aloof from the cause. Such things, however, should not dampen our spirit.

1. Address to a gathering at Anand Bhawan, Allahabad, 18 June 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 19 June and *The Hindustan Times*, 20 June 1945.
2. In August 1942, the people of Ballia district destroyed many railway and police stations, and opened the district jail. One of the released prisoners took over the administration, and for a few days maintained panchayat raj. This revolt was put down by the police and army with severe reprisals.
3. On 16 August 1942, the people of Azamgarh raided the police station, and the police resorted to firing killing 50 persons.
4. On 10 August 1942, about 15 persons were killed and 100 injured when a Congress procession in the village of Doheria in Gorakhpur district was dispersed by police firing. The entire village was later burnt down by the army.



One fact to which I feel I must draw your attention is that the mere release of seven or eight members of the Congress Working Committee in itself does not actually smoothen the way to our cherished goal of freedom. The Working Committee and the Congress are the symbols of independence. It would have been infinitely more desirable if we were brought out of jails through the pressure of our people rather than by alien grace. However, let there be no mistake about the fact that behind our release, was the strong voice of our countrymen.

Some people may say that the Congress has been crushed or is dead; never believe it. I emphatically deny that during these three years, our spirit was ever crushed. The reception you have given me now or the one which I received at Lucknow, with so much joy and enthusiasm, confirms my belief.

I admit that one chapter in the history of the fight for independence has come to an end and with our release, a new chapter has begun. Much, however, still remains to be written.

Let us not forget that quite a large number of our comrades are still behind the bars.

I have heard today that the Working Committee is meeting on 21 June. I was shown the Wavell proposals only after my return from Khali, the day before yesterday, long after you knew them. I have formed my own views about them, but until I have conferred with other members of the Working Committee, it will not be desirable to express them. If there is anyone who can speak on behalf of the Congress, it is Maulana Azad, the President of the Congress. Of course, Gandhiji has always enjoyed a unique privilege to speak on behalf of the Congress.

Whatever may be the merits of the Wavell plan, it is evident that it does not herald the advent of Swaraj. I can only remind you of the pledge, taken by us under the national flag, not to rest till we reach our final goal.

I pay my tribute to the students in the national struggle.<sup>5</sup> I was moved by their courage and enthusiasm. I hope when they grow into manhood, they will witness the birth of a new India.

My relations with the citizens of Allahabad are not such that I should think of thanking you all formally for the great affection shown to me. When you have reposed so much of confidence in me, I shall try to prove worthy of it. Goodbye.

5. Students took a conspicuous part in the August movement. Large numbers of them left or were rusticated from schools or colleges.



## 8. Interview to the Press<sup>1</sup>

Question: What do you think of the Communists branding the Congress Socialist Party and some Congressmen as fifth columnists<sup>2</sup> and what is going to be the attitude of the Congress towards the Communists?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I shall have to study the whole situation to find out the facts and also hear the Communists before I can form an opinion.

Q: Had you any previous knowledge of the Desai-Liaquat formula?

JN: I did not know anything about it while I was in jail. Nor do I know anything about it now.

Q: What is your view of the Wavell plan?

JN: No comment.

Q: But Sardar Patel has commented on it?<sup>3</sup>

JN: Sardar is Sardar.

Q: Do you think that the August movement has failed?

JN: There is no question of failure. We have gained in experience and it is only by experience that a people learn to organise themselves for a struggle.

1. Lucknow, 19 June 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 20 June 1945.

2. For example, in a resolution dated 23 May 1943, the Communist Party of India stated that one of the groups which made up the fifth column in the country was the Congress Socialist Party.

3. Vallabhbhai Patel had said on 17 June 1945 that "parity between caste Hindus and Muslims can have no place at the conference...I hope that no nationalist will be a party to any arrangement which has as its basis a religious division. I express these sentiments not only on my own behalf but all those Congressmen who are with Gandhiji at the moment."

Q: Have you anything to say about the Hindi-Urdu controversy?

JN: Both are old languages and need rejuvenation. I recognise that the language issue is one of the most important problems before the country.

## 7. The Task of the Simla Conference<sup>1</sup>

Any plan to limit Congress representation on the Executive Council to caste Hindus is wholly unacceptable.<sup>2</sup> The Congress cannot send representatives to the Simla Conference<sup>3</sup> with such a restriction. However, this issue will not be allowed to defeat the more important purpose of the conference, namely, to get some form of a more representative government in office.

It is understandable that the Congress may want some Muslims on the Executive Council to represent those many Muslims who support the Congress. There are many Muslims who do not follow the League, although the League has grown in strength in recent years. Nevertheless, the League always seems to be stronger where the Muslim minority is smaller in number. Where the Muslim population is nearly equal to the Hindu population or exceeds it, such as in the North West Frontier, the League is least strong.

If only League Muslims were appointed on the council, all Muslims who have been voting Congress candidates in the years past will be unrepresented. This will be true of the many Muslims in the North West Frontier, in Bengal and in the Punjab, who do not follow the League.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 20 June 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 23 June 1945.
2. The Wavell proposals had limited the Congress representation on the Viceroy's Executive Council to caste Hindus in equal proportion to the Muslim League representation though the Congress as a national organisation covered communities other than the Hindus while the League did not embrace even all the Muslims in the country.
3. All the present and ex-premiers of 11 provinces, the leaders of the parties in the Central Assembly and the Council of States, a leader each of the Sikhs and the depressed classes, Jinnah, Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad were invited for the Simla Conference held from 25 June to 14 July 1945.

But such issues can be dealt with at the Simla Conference without much difficulty. After all, the conference is designed only to set up an interim government, to operate until elections can be held. Elections will enable us to recast the arrangement according to the strength of the various groups shown up in voting. I predict that if elections are held now, the Congress majority in the provinces will be very large. At the same time, it is likely that more League candidates may be elected than were chosen in 1937.

Let it be recognised that the situation in India is a special situation which tends to emphasise communalism, because other types of activity have been suppressed. It must be remembered that India has been living under military and police rule ever since the outbreak of the 1942 rebellion. The situation should be viewed as similar to the situation in Europe where resistance groups had been functioning underground until only recently.

Now a rapid change in the country can be expected as economic and other factors have drawn public attention away from strictly communal conflicts.

New and younger groups are rising in India whose influence will be felt. Among these are the Communists who have solidified their position after the ban on their operations had been lifted.<sup>4</sup> It cannot be overlooked that many of the present leaders are growing old. Mahatma Gandhi, who is in his seventies, and Mr. Jinnah, who is in his sixties can be mentioned. I include myself in the generation that is going out.

It is likely that the Government is prompted, in part, to call the conference because of the problem facing it with the return to civil life, in the near future, of hundreds of thousands of Indian soldiers.

It is quite likely that a government, with as much popular backing as possible, is wanted to help meet this situation. The Indian army is not a national army, but, at least among the officers and non-commissioned officers, there is much nationalistic sentiment.

Ahmadnagar Fort was the best jail I ever have been kept in, although I was not enthusiastic about it. For the first time, there were electric lights. The rooms were fairly large. The food continued to be bad almost to the end, which perhaps explains my thinness. The main reason for the bad food was the cooking. No outside cook could be retained because whoever did the cooking had to become a prisoner along with the rest. The result was that a man who had never cooked before took over the job. Only before the end of the period a better cook was sent.

4. On 22 July 1942.



The Working Committee members ate their meals together and could meet when they wished, but had no visitors. I did not see a woman or even a child during my entire life at Ahmadnagar.

During my imprisonment I wrote a book on India, partly autobiographical, read much and exercised regularly. With the others I kept a garden.

After my release from Almora Jail high in the Himalayas, I could not resist the temptation to go still higher. So on my first day of freedom I set out for a family cabin at Khali where I spent a night and half a day sleeping, listening to the birds, the pines and deodars and thinking quietly. After that I made my way by slow stages to Allahabad where I remained for a night and then set out for Bombay.

## 8. The Nature of India's Problems<sup>1</sup>

During the last three years, the country has passed through very anxious and troublesome times and there is a lot of ill-temper on all sides. But it is the duty of the young people not to lose their equanimity. Most people seem to think that only India faces problems which are difficult to solve. But they are not correct in their view. Everywhere in the world, people are confronted with difficult problems which they are not able to solve easily. We have got to study our problems and we have got to solve them. Ours is a very difficult path, but we should not lose heart. We should show no relaxation in trying to solve our difficulties. The problems which confront us are big, but we should work together to solve them.

Our main problems are fundamental. At every step they either become easier or more difficult and unless we get at the root of the disease we cannot eradicate it.

The Bengal famine is the natural outcome of inefficiency and corruption. It should never have taken place if the Government were run by sound people. On the one hand people were dying and on the other, through profiteering, people were amassing wealth. The whole system is corrupt. There is a moral decay in the Government machinery.

1. Speech at Bombay, 21 June 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 June 1945.



The ovation I have received is spontaneous and natural, but it cannot help to cure the ills. Anything that has happened in the past three years, whether good or bad, has certainly done one thing, that is, it has inspired the people in every corner of the country to do something good for India.

In my province the Congress has been strengthened by the peasants. They might have faltered here and there, but my love for them has increased tenfold.

### 9. Warning against False Moves<sup>1</sup>

Any interpretation of my earlier remarks that I have expressed confidence in the outcome of the Simla Conference is unwarranted and unjustified.

I am wholly unable to say what the outcome of the Simla Conference will be. At present the preliminary question before us is whether it is worthwhile attending it. If the Waveli proposals had been anything of a semi-permanent nature, it would not be looked at. The only reason why it can be considered is that it is a proposal for a brief interim arrangement which would lead the country rapidly to democratic freedom.

Even so, the interim proposals are full of difficulties and certain arrangements are suggested which would lead to complications. I cannot say what may be the outcome of our current Committee meeting or of any subsequent meetings.

Ultimately we have to judge everything from the point of view of the All India Congress Committee Resolution of August 8, 1942.<sup>2</sup> The last part of that resolution, dealing with possible mass movement, does not apply now, but the rest of that resolution lays down our fundamental policy and not even the Working Committee can change that. Only the All India Congress Committee or a full session of the Congress can do so.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 21 June 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22 June 1945.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 436-452.

Oddly enough, the All India Congress Committee is still an illegal organisation.<sup>3</sup> It is very strange that the people should think that the Congress is reviewing its policy when the main body of the Congress organisation is banned.

It has been said that 1945 is not 1942.<sup>4</sup> Much has happened in between in the world and in India. In India, in spite of terrific repression, which still continues in many ways, the spirit of the people has hardened and it is quite impossible to find a stable solution except on the basis of complete freedom which we have always envisaged in terms of world cooperation.

Thousands of our colleagues are still in prison. In a sense, the present position in India can be compared to the unstable and changing situation that has arisen in many European countries freed from Nazi rule, where resistance movements are coming to the surface. Any step taken at this stage may lead to new conflicts.

We are apt to think too much in terms of the minority or communal problem. That is important but other problems, political and economic, are still more important.

The question of future demobilization<sup>5</sup> can also be properly tackled only by a free Indian government. In 1919 and afterwards there were great difficulties, and it may be remembered that there were many flare-ups in the country then, which were ultimately canalized in the Congress noncooperation movement of 1920.

Obviously, the situation will be much more critical this time, because the numbers involved are greater and the resistance to foreign rule has acquired a new force.

For all these reasons and many others, temporary or interim arrangements have no real value except in so far as they lead rapidly to the creation of a free Indian democratic state. The fact that the Viceroy has said that it is a free conference which can be attended without commitments, is helpful.

3. The ban on the A.I.C.C. imposed on 9 August 1942, was lifted only on 22 August 1945 after the announcement that general elections to the Central and Provincial legislatures would soon be held.
4. Mahatma Gandhi had said in a press interview on 4 July 1944: "I cannot take the country back to 1942; history can never be repeated... There is a difference between what I ask today and what was asked in 1942."
5. Nearly 6 million soldiers and non-combatants were due to be demobilised in India at the end of the war.

## 10. A Stop-Gap Plan<sup>1</sup>

I am happy to be in your midst after a long time. When I was told that the press desires to meet me, I became eager to see the faces of friends, old and new. I have no special statement to make today. I shall attempt to answer your questions to the best of my light. There may be some questions, to which I cannot reply off-hand. I shall, however, tell you what I actually think and feel.

I find that most of the questions, placed before me, relate to the Wavell plan. But how could you forget that there are many more important problems facing us. All that I have to say about the Wavell plan at this stage, the Working Committee has already stated in its resolution.<sup>2</sup> So I do not want to say much on this subject. The whole conception of the plan is in the nature of a structure for an interim arrangement to work out a change. It is obviously an interlude and if I feel that a brief temporary arrangement helps me in any way to attain my goal, I shall accept it.

Question : Would not the acceptance of the Wavell proposals be contrary to the spirit of the August Resolution, which had called for independence of Burma, Malaya and other Far Eastern territories?

Jawaharlal Nehru : You know more about the spirit than I do. The first thing that you should know is that it is barely eight days since we came out of prison. Out of this, three to four days have been spent in travelling. It is quite impossible to form any correct judgment of events relying only on the press reports, and without meeting people.

Q: What is your reaction to the role of the Indian Communists during the last three years?

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 23 June 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 24 and 25 June and *The Bharat Jyoti* of Bombay, 24 June 1945.
2. The Congress Working Committee discussed on 21 and 22 June 1945 the Viceroy's proposals and agreed to parity as a temporary measure for the interim government only. Its resolution authorised the Congress President and other Congress invitees to attend the Simla Conference. It also reiterated the policy and goal of the Congress laid down in the August Resolution.



JN: All my reactions are against the activities and the policy of the Communist Party during the last three years.<sup>3</sup> I have heard charges and counter-charges about the Communists. But when it is a question of constitutional or organisational action, it is necessary to find out facts. It is not fair for me to give any opinion in that respect without knowing the relevant facts. However, their general policy has not only been wrong but injurious, both to India's cause and to the larger cause of world freedom, which basically cannot be separated from that of India. It is true that national aspirations have to be judiciously set into a pattern consonant with an international order. Nevertheless, the fact remains that when a conflict between the two arises, international interest takes second place. This applies to free countries like the United States as well. I can cite instances of action taken by great countries when they faced national and international issues simultaneously. Soviet Russia had been fundamentally opposed to Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, for national reasons, as well as, may be, for certain international considerations, it entered into a non-aggression pact with Germany. It was only when Hitler attacked Russia that the latter declared war on Germany. Take the case of any other country for that matter. Britain went on appeasing Hitler and Mussolini, till it served its ends. No government had or has a foreign policy which, in its opinion, goes contrary to its national interests. I am not aware of any country which does not fit in its international policy with the national policy. Whenever there is a conflict between national and international policies, the national policy wins. May be, sometimes, the national approach is narrow.

It is a good sign that more and more people are of opinion that isolated nationalism, without due regard to international interests, is injurious. I personally agree with it. My point is that all nations, even great and powerful countries like the U.S.A., Soviet Russia and England, have to look after national interests, which are ultimately, of course, linked with larger international considerations. Now, if that is true for the great free countries it is more so for a dependent country like India. To hell with anybody who pushes the country this way and that way — is the natural reaction of the average Indian. Even in the most politically developed countries there is a very small fraction of people who will fit in ideologically their national policy with international issues.

3. The Communist Party opposed the August struggle and supported the British war effort. The All India Trade Union Congress, which was under the control of the Communists, called for intensified production and avoidance of strikes in the interests of the war. The Muslim League's Pakistan demand was considered by them as a just aspiration.



So far as the Indian leaders are concerned, they were probably more international-minded than the statesmen of big countries. They have tried to make the Indian issue a part of the international issue. That has been the objective of every country and of India especially during the last three years of war. You know the sympathy of India for China and its intense hatred of Nazism. Provided special barriers are not put in its way, it is quite possible to see these feelings translated into action.

It is in this context that you should see our stand of 1942. Many people seem to believe that something happened in 1942 out of nothing. The Communist Party is quite free to propagate communism in any part they wish. But notice this that even the Communist Parties in different countries have been having varying policies. It is not communism as such I am talking about. Fundamentally, the Indian Communist policy is not adopted from the standpoint of the country where it functions, but from the standpoint of the Russian foreign policy. I have every sympathy for Russia and the great advance Russia has made, but from any point of view, I do not think our nation's policy can be bound up by the Russian foreign policy. The general question is whether the policy of Indian Communists has been injurious to the cause of India.

I can understand, and am prepared to excuse the fact that their policy does not fall in line with Indian nationalism. They have a fine party machine and ardent workers, but they have built up a psychological barrier between their party and Indian nationalism. Sometimes it becomes difficult to overcome this barrier.

Q: Have not the Communists been pressing for a Congress-League understanding and the release of Congress leaders?

JN: The Communists missed the chance of a lifetime in India during the last two or three years. They could have made themselves an enormously powerful party if they had functioned somewhat differently. At a critical moment in India's history, it was difficult to be neutral, but they went to the other side. They may be right, but the approach was the question. Yet the industry and organising capacity of the Communists are praiseworthy.

During the week that I have been out of prison, I spent three days in my province. These three days gave me greater insight into the happenings of August 1942, than those three years in Ahmadnagar. You must have read Gandhiji's correspondence with the Viceroy over this issue.

Q: What would you say now about the August disturbances?

JN: I do not approve of some of the things that have happened. Let me give an instance: In Ballia, a district in the U.P., the whole structure of the British Government collapsed from top to bottom. There was damage. There was shooting and oppression by the British authorities and also by the Indian authorities acting under them. Military planes and other firing squads were put into use and numerous villages were destroyed. But so far as I know in all the charges that have been brought against the villagers there is not a single charge of personal violence. They did not indulge in personal vendetta or injury. I do not defend the actions of the people involved in the disturbances, but the normal reaction of an Indian will be to say: To hell with anyone who tries to push us out of the way. Violence or nonviolence, it is more important for people to show courage than to be kicked about by any individual or authority. If the British Government again launches an attack on us, it will be met, and met by every man wherever he is attacked. It may be met by ten or a thousand. Many may take it lying down. A nation which submits to this kind of treatment is a dead nation, and I do not want my people to be a dead people, and therefore, if such a thing is done, it must be resisted.

I may say one or two things about the Indian army. On the one hand it is called mercenary, on the other hand, it is praised as a voluntary and magnificent fighting force. But when the word mercenary is used, it is only in a technical sense. None can call it a national army.

During the Cripps discussions, I told Sir Stafford Cripps: "If we are in charge of the Government, our first job would be to infuse national feeling in the Indian army and make India feel that it is our army, fighting for the freedom of our people and of other peoples. As so far the Indian army has been kept completely isolated from the Indian people, the Indian soldier is not like a British Tommy or an American soldier going home. I cannot meet any Indian armyman. They are told to keep away from us, and are allowed to read some selected newspapers passed by the military control." Cripps replied: "I am afraid that cannot be done. In fact it is not an Indian army. It is the Indian sector of the British army."

I know that the whole army structure cannot be changed in war-time. The army and all military operations have to remain under a British Commander-in-Chief and the General Staff. I wanted to give only a national colouring to the army, so that I could go to the people asking for recruits. But Cripps's answer was a damper. So when we



use the word mercenary, it is not done in any disparaging sense of the army itself, but only in a technical sense.

Roughly speaking, the present Indian army can broadly be divided into two divisions: the old section of hereditary and professional who are magnificent soldiers — the Rajputs and the Jats and others of North India, and the new army that is being built from the east, west and the south of the country.

There is no doubt that the Indian army has proved a very magnificent fighting force. Wherever they had a chance to fight, it had done exceedingly well. But I am convinced that had a national colouring been given to it, it would have done infinitely better.

Q: What is your view of the demobilization problem?

JN: It will be a tremendous problem. Take it from me that in spite of its scheme, the Government is not capable of tackling this problem. At the end of this war the number of demobbed soldiers will be far more than at the end of the last war when the national awakening was restricted to a far smaller section of Indian soldiers.

Q: Your comment on Bombay Plan<sup>4</sup> . . .

JN: When I read the first part of the Bombay Plan at Ahmadnagar, I was agreeably surprised and pleased to read it. It is not because I liked everything in it. I felt that it did not deal sufficiently with agriculture and with the problem of distribution. The satisfaction was in finding that the first blueprint had been prepared by a group of hard-headed businessmen. In India, we have been accustomed to think and act in petty ways, whatever be the issue. Once Gopal Krishna Gokhale estimated that it would take exactly 362 years to remove illiteracy from India judging from the pace of government measures. So it pleased me to find that this particular plan put forward a picture of big changes in a relatively short time. The plan should be judged by the extent to which it will raise the standard of living and the health of the people.

But the fundamental question is, which authority is going to implement it? The very best plan, if run by wrong persons, will harm the country.

Q: Are you aware of the existence of a blackmarket in the country?

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 336, 353.

JN: It is a very painful subject. I have only heard about it, but that is more than enough. There has been utter moral degradation among a number of officials and non-officials. It is true that a foreign government of authoritarian type usually does not attract capable and right type of men to its service. When the Government is in a crisis as in 1942, there is further separation between the Government and the people. The best man for the Government is then one who will damn his country and stand up against his own people. The war further relaxes every vestige of moral grip over the society. A catastrophe like the Bengal famine further aggravates the crisis. The entire social fabric goes to pieces. I am not referring to the deaths of a couple of million people nor to the stunting of many more lakhs of people. The tragedy is not that millions died of starvation, but they — the profiteers — survived. According to the Woodhead<sup>5</sup> Commission's report, blackmarketeers made a profit of 1,000 rupees for each of the 1,500,000 people who died during the Bengal famine. I do not kill even a small insect, but it will give me the greatest pleasure if all these profiteers were hung by the neck till they are dead.

Q: How do you justify the acceptance of war effort advertisements from the Government by the nationalist newspapers?

JN: I have myself conducted a newspaper, and I know newspapers badly need money. But our [*National Herald*] was the only paper not to accept government advertisements, because we did not agree with the Government policy.

Q: What about Subhas?

JN: I have no doubt that when Subhas Chandra Bose went out of India, his primary motive was to achieve freedom for India somehow, may be with Japanese help, where I think he erred.

Q: Would he be permitted to return to India as a free and honourable citizen by the Central Government in which Congress may be participating?

JN: I cannot say what may be possible for the contemplated Central Government under the Wavell Plan. I can, however, recall one thing.

5. John Woodhead (1881-1973); member of the Indian Civil Service, 1904-39; Adviser to the Secretary of State for India, 1939-44; Chairman of the Famine Inquiry Committee, 1944; President, India, Pakistan and Burma Association, 1948-62.



When I was in Calcutta in 1942, there were talks of Subhas Bose leading an army to India to liberate it, in cooperation with the Japanese. I was asked what would I do. I said that I would fight him for he was coming under Japanese auspices, under Japanese control and much to the benefit of the Japanese.<sup>6</sup> He was quite wrong in his methods when he thought that he could win the freedom of India with the help of the Japanese.

Q: What is your reaction to Sir Firoz Khan Noon's<sup>7</sup> statement that Gandhiji should retire in favour of you?<sup>8</sup>

JN: Gentlemen of the press, you should be knowing that Firoz Khan Noon is not taken seriously anywhere.

Q: Can you say whether retribution will be demanded of those who had perpetrated atrocities upon the people during 1942?

JN: A more important question ought to have been about the aid for those who have suffered during 1942. The question of meting justice to oppressors is different, but no doubt it will be our duty to help the victims and their dependents.

Q: What would be the future relation between Congressmen and Communists and Communist dominated bodies?

JN: So long as the Congress remains an illegal body, the question of legal or constitutional relationship does not arise.

6. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 262-263.

7. (1893-1970); Member of Defence, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1942-45; Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1955-57 and Prime Minister, 1957-58 of Pakistan.

8. On 3 May 1945, Firoz Khan Noon, a delegate to the San Francisco Conference, had denounced Mahatma Gandhi as pro-Japanese and demanded that he should yield his leadership to Jawaharlal.

## 11. Instructions to the Congress Delegation<sup>1</sup>

Confidential

1. It must be clearly understood that the suggested arrangements are being considered on an interim and temporary basis only, especially in regard to communal parity. This principle of such parity is not accepted. It applies only to the Centre and cannot be extended to the province.

2. While communal parity, in the limited and temporary sense as indicated above, is being agreed to, it must be clearly understood that this does not mean that all the Muslim members of the national government will be nominated by the Muslim League. The Congress cannot recognise the sole right of such nomination by a communal organisation, nor can it reduce itself as a consequence to a limited communal field. The Congress, therefore, is of opinion that names may be proposed for Hindus, Muslims, scheduled classes, etc., by all groups in the conference and to be adopted by the conference as a whole.

3. While the Working Committee is anxious to help in finding a way out of the present deadlock which leads to Indian freedom, and will work to that end, it must be remembered that any decision taken by it has to be confirmed and ratified by the A.I.C.C. The fact that the A.I.C.C. and other Congress committees are still banned is an obstacle in our way.

4. Further the fact of large number of detenus and Congress prisoners.

5. Clarification to be sought from the Viceroy or in the Conference in regard to:

- i) External Affairs Department
- ii) Financial implications of defence
- iii) How far it is possible to give a nationalist character to the Indian army without, at present, changing its status or organisation in any way. The Indian army officers and men should have the same freedom of meeting people as the British army has in England. The present barriers isolating them to go.
- iv) After the present war in South East Asia is over, it must be clearly understood that the Indian Government cannot support

1. Written on 25 June 1945. This was given by the Congress Working Committee to the Congress President who had been authorised to take whatever action was necessary in connection with the implementation of the results of the Simla Conference. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

any policy aimed at the continuation of imperialist control of any of the countries of South East Asia, nor can it allow the use of Indian resources for the deprivation of freedom of any of these countries.

- v) In regard to the Indian States, while recognising that during the interim period, the powers of the Crown Representative continue, it is clear that the national government will have to deal with many matters which overlap and have concern with the States in regard to trade, industry, labour etc., etc. This Government may, when it considers this necessary, make suggestions and recommendations in regard to other State matters also to the Crown Representative. Further the barriers between the States peoples, the princes, and members of the national government and their associates should be removed, so as to help in mutual discussions and consultation and the consideration of common problems, thus leading to the solution of these problems.
- vi) Provincial coalitions would depend on the particular conditions of parties and groups in each particular province.
- vii) The question of recruitment for the higher services and the commitments made in regard to them must be considered. Commitments in regard to foreign recruitments cannot be accepted, though the national government will, whenever it considers it necessary, welcome and engage foreign experts.

The President will add to these matters requiring elucidation whenever he considers this necessary and give such other directions as may be required. He may also make such alterations as he considers necessary.

## 12. Responsibility for the August Disturbances<sup>1</sup>

Individually I do take the responsibility for all that happened in the country during the August disturbances. I do not want to shake off

1. Address to Journalists Association, Allahabad, 28 June 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 29 June and *The Hindu*, 30 June 1945. Jawaharlal wrote down the questions put to him by the journalists and made these comments in reply.



this responsibility and stand aside. But to say that the Congress organised any movement is fantastic and absolutely wrong. Whatever happened after the arrest of the leaders, was spontaneous. The truth is that the Congress had given no instruction for any movement. This is clear from the fact, and I do not hesitate to say it, that had the Congress given instructions, even just ten days before the arrest of the leaders, there would have been a far more tremendous upheaval in the country than what actually happened as a result of this spontaneous movement.

I do not blame the British Government for their repression of these disturbances. But what fills me with horror is to see the moral degradation which has crept into the ranks of Indian police and executive officers. The manner in which they behaved towards their own people and the corrupt practices which are prevalent among them are a shame to anyone who has a decent code of moral ethics. The result of this moral degradation has been that a new rich class of these people has sprung up in the country, and it will be a problem before the country now to remove this dirt from its surface.

From what I have heard, bribery and other corrupt practices have to a large extent, got into almost every department of the Government. Perhaps a few subordinate judicial officers have tried to keep themselves aloof from it. Otherwise the whole system of the Government has been corrupt.

I do not complain about what the Government did. I would place the acts of the Government before the bar of public opinion. I would do it all the more because the British Government is in the habit of parading false ideologies.

Such questions as the communal problem and the language problem may be of paramount interest to politicians and journalists but they are hardly of any interest to the man in the street.

If a Gallup poll is taken on the language controversy, it will be found that the people who take any interest in the controversy are just a few drops in the ocean.

I am not worried about the communal problem in the country, not because it is not a big problem but because I view it in a different perspective. I view the problem from a historical, national and international perspective, and viewed in this light the problem, though a big one, cannot be called a fundamental problem. The fundamental problem is the betterment of the condition of the masses in the country.

The Congress has always tried to solve it. The Congress has for its objective the independence of the country, and any problem which hindered the attainment of that objective has to be removed.



I think that questions relating to unemployment, zamindars and kisans fundamentally affect the lives of the people. Even if India gets independence today, these questions cannot be solved all of a sudden.

Other problems like the industrialisation of the country and agricultural advancement are linked together and we cannot deal with one while ignoring the other. It is all right to say that there should be industrialisation. Big industries as well as cottage industries should develop side by side. But one thing you should bear in mind. Before we embark on industrialisation we should prepare an extensive market for the utilisation of the goods produced. Mass production and mass consumption always go together and it will be futile to embark on mass production unless the people are in a position to buy the goods that are produced. Ninety per cent of the people are not in a position to purchase their requirements. So the first and foremost task is that the economic level of the people must be raised.

In this connection, I would refer to the planning in various spheres. Some work was done by the National Planning Committee, but it has not been completed. At that time the Government paid no heed to planning for the future. For example, education imparted to the people had been unplanned and unsystematic. In the beginning, it was meant to provide clerks for Government offices. But when this need was met there was unemployment among the educated classes. Hundreds of graduates came out of various universities from year to year and remained mostly unemployed, because of the defective education they received. A result of this widespread unemployment is that there is not enough scope for talent among youngmen. I refer to the case of Ramanujam,<sup>2</sup> who was rotting as a mere clerk in the Madras Port Trust until his genius in mathematics was recognised by an English professor who secured him a scholarship in Cambridge University. Ramanujam then attained world recognition and he was the first Indian to be made a member of the Royal Society. His mathematical problems are even now discussed in English magazines.

I emphasise that planning must always have an objective before it and some authority behind it. Planning by the British Government, for instance, will be of little use to Indians. Planning by a truly democratic government will be welcomed by the people even though it may not be perfect in all respects.

2. Srinivasa Ramanujam (1887-1920) with whom Prof. G.H. Hardy collaborated in research in pure mathematics.

There have been various post-war plans in India, namely the Bombay Plan, the Royist Plan<sup>3</sup> etc., and it is our duty to pick and choose plans from these and improve them.

I feel that for any economic planning to succeed in the country now, it will have to be considered on a large scale. I am satisfied with the Bombay Plan although I do not agree with some of its recommendations. I am pleased that the plan is on a big scale. The intention of the authors of the plan to improve the economic conditions of the people on a large scale and in a short time is commendable.

Question: Do you favour state ownership and control of key industries in the country?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The present circumstances require some form of ownership and control by the State. I feel that mother industries must be cent per cent controlled by the State. The ownership of key industries must be vested in the State if there were to be any improvement ind. strially.

I feel aggrieved that Indians in Burma, South Africa and Ceylon are being denied the natural and ordinary citizenship rights. I am, however, opposed to any special privileges being given to Indians abroad.

I condemn the ban on *The People's War*<sup>4</sup> and the Sind ban on the *Satyartha Prakash*.<sup>5</sup> I make it clear that it is not because I like or dislike them that I condemn the orders, but because the orders are wrong as they infringe the civil liberties of the people. In this light only I am condemning the orders.

I would urge the pressmen to go into the interior villages and tell the people of the conditions prevailing in the country.

3. M.N. Roy's *People's Plan* with an outlay of Rs. 15,000 crores in ten years aimed at the conversion of a "capitalist economy" into a "socialist economy" by nationalising all important "instruments of production".
4. In May 1945, the U.P. Government banned within the province the circulation of the Communist Party organ, *The People's War*, as it had published an article on the Peshawar incidents of 1930.
5. In December 1944, the Sind Government had prohibited the publication of *Satyartha Prakash* (Light of Truth) by Swami Dayananda Saraswati unless Chapter 14, which was considered offensive to the Muslims, was omitted.



### 13. The Chances of Success<sup>1</sup>

We feel we must succeed at Simla. I have been expecting an S.O.S. I knew it would come sooner or later.<sup>2</sup> But it has upset my programme.

The Congress President and the Congress leaders are trying their best to find a solution, but that does not mean that the offer, or whatever it is, takes us any distance. We feel, however, that it may create a situation which might help in solving the problem and therefore, we must try to get it succeed.

I know nothing apart from what I have read in the newspapers these last few days. I think Mr. Jinnah is certainly wrong in thinking that every Muslim seat in the Executive Council will be captured by the Muslim League.<sup>3</sup>

This cannot be compared with the Cripps offer. Sir Stafford brought a definite proposal. We have no proposal now. We have the opening to a future proposal.

Question: Are you confident of a settlement at Simla?

Jawaharlal Nehru: This is a personal question. So far as I am concerned I have developed such a detached outlook that nothing can be without some hope. One gets used to so many things. I am very hopeful.

Q: You have been suggested in a London newspaper as the future minister of foreign affairs in independent India.<sup>4</sup>

JN: I have always been interested in foreign affairs but that is purely speculative.

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 30 June 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 1 July 1945.
2. On 29 June 1945, Maulana Azad sent a message to Jawaharlal that he should come up to Simla for consultation.
3. On 29 June 1945, Jinnah told a press conference that no other group but the League could name the Muslim members of the proposed Viceroy's Executive Council. He criticised the Wavell plan on the ground that the Muslims actually would be in a permanent minority in the new Government because representatives of the Sikhs and the scheduled castes would vote with the Hindus.
4. *The Daily Express* of London published a report on the Simla Conference on 29 June 1945 with the heading: "Nehru may be India's Foreign Minister".

Q: Mahatma Gandhi has declared "Nehru is my heir".<sup>5</sup>

JN: What does that mean?

Q: What are your views on the San Francisco declaration?

JN: It is a sad thing to confess that I have not had time to study all the details and implications of this huge charter.<sup>6</sup> I hope, some day, to go to America.

Q: What is your comment on the Levant situation?<sup>7</sup>

JN: Can there be two opinions about it? The French aggression is obviously objectionable and uncalled for. The difference in the attitude of the Allied powers towards the Germans seems rather extraordinary after the Montgomery<sup>8</sup>—Zhukov<sup>9</sup>—Eisenhower<sup>10</sup> meeting in Berlin. De Gaulle<sup>11</sup> seems quiet these days: What's he doing?

5. In his speech to the A.I.C.C. meeting at Wardha in January 1942, Mahatma Gandhi had said: "Somebody suggested that Pandit Jawaharlal and I were estranged. . . . We have had differences from the moment we became co-workers, and yet I have said for some years and say now that not Rajaji but Jawaharlal will be my successor. He says that he does not understand my language, and that he speaks a language foreign to me. This may or may not be true. But language is no bar to a union of hearts. And I know this that when I am gone he will speak my language."
6. The objectives of the U.N. Charter, which was finalised on 22 June 1945, were: to prevent wars, settle disputes by peaceful means, promote worldwide progress and better standard of living and remove socio-economic conflicts. It provided four organs: General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council and International Court of Justice. The administration of the U.N. was to be handled by a Secretary-General.
7. While negotiating in May 1945 with the Syrian and Lebanese Governments for special privileges by virtue of its mandate rule, France strengthened its garrison as a demonstration of force. This provoked the Arabs to resist, and to quell their resistance, the French bombed Damascus on 29 May 1945.
8. Bernard Law Montgomery (1887-1976); 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein; Commander-in-Chief, British occupation forces in Germany, 1945-46; Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 1946-48; Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, 1951-58.
9. Georgi Konstantinovich Zhukov (1895-1975); Commander-in-Chief of Russian forces on western front, 1941-42; Soviet Military Administrator, Germany and member, Allied Control Committee, 1945-46; Soviet Minister of Defence, 1955-57.
10. Dwight David Eisenhower (1890-1969); Chief of the Allied Forces in Europe in World War II; President of the United States, 1952-60.
11. (1890-1970); President of the Government, Minister of National Defence and Head of the Armies, France, 1945-6; President of the Fifth Republic, 1958-69.



I expect to be in Simla by noon tomorrow. I do not know who will meet me and who will want to see me first when I get there. I have met the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, only once before, very formally during the Cripps Mission in 1942. Lord Wavell was then the Commander-in-Chief.

I do not think any set of circumstances precipitated the present parleys. The continuous pressure of events ultimately has to lead to something.

I feel slightly below par because of the continuous concentrated political activity since my release. For the moment, my mind is more on Kashmir than on the Simla Conference. Kashmir gives me peace of mind, and, with its background of snow-capped ranges, it cheers me up.

Q: Now that Congressmen might join the Council, would you allow them to contest municipal elections?

JN: I cannot offhand reply to the all-India aspect of this question, but in the United Provinces we have made it a rule not to allow a Congressman to go within hundred miles of the municipal offices.

#### 14. The Prospects for the Future<sup>1</sup>

Question: Would you be happy to accept a seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council if you are chosen?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The question of my happiness or otherwise does not arise. The real question is as to who will choose me. That is to say, if I am chosen by the Congress Working Committee or the Congress President and am directed by him to go and work in the Viceroy's Executive Council, it will be a different thing from the position if I were chosen by the Viceroy. If I am chosen by the Congress, I cannot at present say whether I would say "yes" or "no". It will all depend upon circumstances and my mood. I am a man of discipline and if the Congress decides to participate in the new Executive Council, and

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 1 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 2 July 1945.

I am chosen by the Congress, then the Viceroy's choice will be merely formal. I would, therefore, have to consider the question from this angle but as I said before, my decision will depend upon circumstances and my mood. I will not be happy in joining a government which falls short of independent government.

Q: What is your attitude towards Subhas Chandra Bose today?

JN: I recall the statement which I made in reply to a similar question in early 1942 at Calcutta. I had then said that I would fight against Subhas Chandra Bose if he came to India under the auspices of the Japanese Government, because his coming to India then would have proved dangerous for the future of India. But, if he comes back to India after the Japanese war, it will be wrong to adopt a vindictive policy against him. It is a different matter, however, on what conditions he will be allowed to return to India. An Indian leader cannot ignore the major motive of another Indian and in the case of Subhas Bose, I have no doubt the major motive has been the independence of India.

Q: Would you broadcast to America?

JN: In Bombay, an offer was made to me. But it was too late as I was then leaving for Allahabad. If I were extended similar facilities here as exist in Bombay I will be willing to give a broadcast to America.

Q: Would you visit America in the near future?

JN: I will be extremely happy to do so, but at present things are fairly complicated in India and, therefore, it will not be possible to go out of the country, but I will be happy to visit America if I get a suitable opportunity.

Q: Have you received any invitation from the Viceroy to see him?

JN: No. Normally, Congressmen are not accustomed to meet the Viceroy, but if an invitation comes to me, I shall certainly meet him. Fourteen years ago I had come to Simla on almost a similar mission and met Lord Willingdon, the then Viceroy, in connection with Congress representation at the Second Round Table Conference. My present visit reminds me of those days when Mahatma Gandhi had to be virtually packed off from Simla in a special train in order to catch the last ship for England from Bombay, because the last train from Simla



had left before the decision to attend the Round Table Conference had been taken by the Congress Working Committee.

Q: Should not the Congress demand the release of all political prisoners before proceeding with the negotiations?

JN: Obviously, no Congressman can function in any government if the last of his colleagues is in prison. I include among them all the political prisoners whether convicted for violence or nonviolence, except a few individual cases which require special examination.

Q: What is your attitude towards Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan?

JN: Though I would not like to go into individual cases, yet as far as Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan is concerned I want him to be released.

Q: Will the Simla Conference succeed?

JN: The only competent person to answer any question on the Simla Conference is the Congress President, and if any question has to be asked, it should be addressed to him and to him alone.

Q: What is the position of those still in jail?

JN: I am continuously thinking of those who are still in prison and their dependents who are suffering outside, and the dependents of those who have been shot during the last three years. I may mention the case of an English lady in Almora who has been sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment because she helped the families of some who were stated to be absconders. In the opinion of the Government, any help to such families means helping the absconders themselves.

Q: What are your views on the international situation?

JN: After the last war many things have happened and many changes have taken place, but the end of this war will witness changes on a much larger scale, particularly in Europe and Russia. The end of the war in Europe has already raised many such problems in Asia. India's national movement assumed great strides after the last war. From the manner

2. On 29 June 1945, when the Conference met the Viceroy found that there was no agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League. He asked all the parties to send him lists of persons whom they would like to see included in the Executive Council. After seeing their lists and possibly considering further names of his own, he would form on paper an Executive Council and submit it to the Conference.

in which the movement has grown, one can very well imagine what the after-effects of the present war will be. Today the national movement is infinitely more powerful and there is greater political consciousness in the country and, therefore, it does not require a prophet to predict that far-reaching consequences will flow from the end of this. How these new forces, which are already showing signs of rising, can be channelled for the good of the country is the problem that the Congress will have to face in the near future.

## 15. The Will to be Free<sup>1</sup>

Since my release from jail a fortnight ago, I have done a good deal of travelling and wherever I went I have found great enthusiasm among the people. The events of the last three years and the sufferings the people have undergone as a result of the unprecedented repression have not produced any unfavourable effect on the people. I made it a point to ask the people I met whether they were nervous, and I always got the answer in the negative. Similarly, I asked them whether they felt strong enough and I always got the answer in the affirmative.

In my opinion, therefore, in spite of what has happened during the last three years — and the people have suffered much on account of the repression which can be compared only with the repression of the days of the great Indian Mutiny — the people have enough strength. The only difficulty is that their strength is not properly channelised and directed.

A destructive waterfall can by proper organisation be converted to produce hydro-electric power, useful for factories and human consumption. Similarly, if the vast energy and enthusiasm of the people of India were properly channelised and directed, India's national movement will develop such strength as will be impossible to resist. What is, therefore, wanted is proper organisation of the will of the people. There is no lack of will, but there is lack of organisation and marshalling of the forces. We are, indeed, fortunate in having such great

1. Address to a gathering outside his residence, Simla, 1 July 1945. From *The Tribune*, 2 July 1945.



leaders as Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, but let me tell you that leaders alone cannot bring us to our goal of freedom. It is only the iron will of the people, and the organised strength of the followers behind the leaders that can bring us freedom. If the followers are of the right type and are properly organised even lesser leaders than Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad can lead us nearer to our goal of freedom.

It is essential that we should all learn discipline. If India were to obtain her freedom, her people must learn to discipline themselves. I have seen the behaviour of the Pathan crowds during my visit to the North West Frontier three years ago. They behaved as if they had been disciplined soldiers. Such discipline is highly necessary for the masses.

I also deprecate attempts to touch the feet of the leaders. This is a pernicious habit. It is a sign of slavery and we should effectively discourage it.

I came to Simla fourteen years ago, more or less for a similar work. I have come once again in response to the call from *Rashtrapati*, the Maulana Sahib. I do not know what has transpired at the Simla Conference.<sup>2</sup> I shall certainly get to know about this from the Maulana Sahib. But whatever might have happened, I want the people to understand one thing and that is this that we of the Congress have not come here for fun. We have come here to see if we can find a way out of the present difficulties.

We in India have to think not merely in terms of our own freedom, but the freedom of India against the background of world problems. During the last war we were content with passing academic resolutions and attending offices. Since then we have witnessed many changes, particularly in our national movement. The Congress with a revolutionary programme has brought about a radical change in the outlook of our people and has taught our people to look at our problems not only from the national point of view but against the background of international events. The Congress has also taught the people the efficacy of direct action for attaining freedom. Our national consciousness has been greatly roused. What we now require is a proper channelisation and regulation of the will to be free.

2. At this time the Simla Conference had come to a deadlock. Jinnah wrote to the Viceroy, proposing, first, that instead of the League submitting a panel, its representatives should be chosen in personal discussion between himself and the Viceroy, and secondly, that all the Muslims should be chosen from the League.

## 16. Wavell's Report of his Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>

1. I spoke to Nehru on the new political proposals, generally on the lines of paragraph six of P.S.V.'s note,<sup>2</sup> but briefly.

2. We then entered on a long general conversation on India's problems and grievances. Nehru began by referring to the general hostility against Great Britain. I said it seemed to me to be largely confined to the educated class, and that the actual agriculturist and labourer certainly did not show any particular hostility to the British. He said that the hostility of the peasant was directed primarily against the landlord, the moneylender, and others who oppressed him; that he regarded the Government as responsible for this, and that therefore he felt hostile towards it. I said that this would then apply just as much to an Indian Government; and he agreed. He then went into a history of India's needs, for industrial development, for improved agriculture, for adequate social services, and so forth. He described India as suffering from industrial "arrested growth;" and said that there had been a time when India was industrially as far or further advanced than the rest of the world, but that the introduction of machines, and the refusal of machines to India had killed her industries and had caused a drift from the towns back to the land, which was in consequence over-populated. I suggested that the growth of the population had a good deal to do with the overcrowding, and rather questioned whether the drift from the towns back to the land had been a really serious factor. He then spoke of the Russian system, agreed as to the immense cost of life that had been caused by that system, and said that the Russian methods were not really applicable to India. He said that almost the first problem was to reform the system of land tenure, instancing particularly the Permanent Settlement in Bengal. He said it should be done peacefully and without revolution. He said that though he described himself as a socialist, he did not believe in pure socialism.

This conversation lasted for about an hour, during which we ranged over a great number of problems and a good deal of history. Nehru was very pleasant, not at all violent and quite reasonable and sensible.

1. Simla, 2 July 1945. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. V, pp. 1192-3.

2. The Private Secretary to the Viceroy had given to Wavell a note giving his suggestions for his conversation with Jawaharlal. "In talking with him I suggest you should cover much the same ground as in your talks with Gandhi and Jinnah, and should also tell him how much harm his recent speeches are likely to do."



3. I then thought it necessary to bring him back to the question of the present political proposals. He said that although they fell far short of what India had a right to expect, and were insufficient and vague, Congress would do its best to make a success of them.

4. Finally, he came back to what I had said at the beginning of the talk, that law and order must be maintained and that I could not permit of any victimization of Government officials or police. This was the only part of the conversation in which Nehru showed any heat. He persisted that he knew of terrible scandals and oppression, conduct which he described as utterly inhuman; and asked how he could be expected to tolerate such. I said that if any instances of injustice or oppression could be brought up and proved, they would certainly be remedied; but that I was not going back into any inquiry about the events of 1942 or vague allegations against officials. I said that if his friends had the proofs of injustice and oppression in their hands, they ought to have brought them up before now and not waited till the release of the Congress supporters. He said that it was quite impossible for them to do so, they would merely have been put in confinement under the D.I.R. I refused to accept this, and said that the fact that they waited until now would certainly give some colour to the idea of political persecution; and that anyway I was quite determined that I would see that law and order was maintained, which rested largely on the confidence of the officials and police.

5. The interview, which had lasted just over an hour and a half, terminated on this. Nehru was very pleasant throughout the interview and showed little bitterness except on the question of my suggestion that he and his friends were resorting, or would resort, to victimization.

## 17. Progressive Socialism for India<sup>1</sup>

I advocate progressive socialism as a solution for India's multitudinous economic ills.

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 8 July 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 9 July 1945.



I discount Soviet influence on India. Recent American comments that India will look more and more to Russia for inspiration and guidance is considerably wide of the mark.

While vague socialistic ideas are popularly admired in India and the Russian achievements — especially in Central Asia and in war — have greatly influenced Indian opinion, communism as such is not a great force in India at present.

The Communist Party in India is stronger and better organised than ever, since it has been able to function legally during the past three years, but even so, its numbers and influence are most limited. The Communists have done good work, both in the Bengal famine and elsewhere, but, having opposed the general trend of the national movement, they have created a barrier between themselves and Indian nationalism, which greatly lessens their influence outside their own fold.

While I envisage a progressive socialism for India I imagine that a great deal of individual freedom and initiative would still be left. In any large-scale planning by the state, which seems inevitable if progress is to be rapid, some measure of state control and direction is necessary and it is difficult to say how far this will go in the initial stages.

I emphasise, however, that State planning without a real national government will merely be a continuation of foreign domination. India is an outstanding example of long-arrested development due to many causes — chiefly the British economic and political control on industry, leading to progressive impoverishment of the people.

Since rapid progress of the new state requires capital and trained personnel, any national government will welcome the cooperation of advanced countries, especially America, in supplying capital goods and experts.

But because of long experience of economic domination, India is most sensitive on this subject and will resist anything leading to the creation of powerful foreign vested interests. Big business domination — even Indian — will be objected to by the national government. One of the first objectives of any national government must be the raising of the purchasing power and living standards of the masses which means far-reaching agrarian reforms to remove all feudal relics from the land which obstruct agricultural and industrial growth.

### III. On Muslim League's Cooperation<sup>1</sup>

The Congress is prepared to participate<sup>2</sup> in a new interim government under the terms of the Wavell plan to which it has already agreed, even though the Muslim League decides against entering such a government.<sup>3</sup> But the Congress would like the door left open for the League.

Of course, this matter is not entirely in our hands, because there are other parties involved, one of which is the British Government, but we hope that if the Muslim League decides not to come in, that decision will be only temporary and that it will change its mind and come in later.

Question: What is the Congress plan if the Simla Conference fails?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am unable to answer such a question because such a possibility has not been considered at all. One should not enter into negotiations as these and work for their success and at the same time plan for the future step if they fail.

The Congress wants the Muslim League to participate in the proposed new government, because it feels that it must cooperate with all elements in the country in the present circumstances and that all must work together for the good of India.

Q: What is your reaction to the position of heir assigned to you recently by Mahatma Gandhi?

JN: I discount it. There is no question of any ownership or inheritance. Besides, in a democracy there are no heirs to political positions.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 11 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 July 1945.
2. On 6 July 1945 the Congress submitted to the Viceroy a list of 15 names from which the representatives for the proposed reorganisation of the Government might be chosen. They were : Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Jinnah, Mohammed Ismail Khan, Asaf Ali, Liaquat Ali Khan, Amrit Kaur, S.P. Mookerji, Muniswami Pillai, Radhanath Das, G.L. Mehta, Ardeshir Dalal and Master Tara Singh.
3. Following the Viceroy's refusal on 11 July 1945 to concede the Muslim League's claim that all Muslim seats of the proposed Executive Council should be filled by its nominees, Jinnah decided to stay out of the Simla talks. Immediately there were reports that the Viceroy would go ahead with the Congress in forming his Executive Council.

JN: I hope to visit the United States of America, but my going depends entirely on the situation in India. I have hopes of at least a short visit to America which may be followed by another visit for a longer stay there. In foreign relations, if we are to have any, it is very important that we establish contact with popular opinion in America. There should be an exchange of knowledge as to the popular will in the two countries. The same is true of Russia. The international situation today is that there are two powers which really count and these two are America and Russia. Regardless of what happens in the next few weeks or months or even the next year or two, ultimately popular opinion will prevail and cause the decisions, and that is why it is important that we should know the popular will abroad.

## 19. The End of Domination<sup>1</sup>

I have a liking for Punjabis in spite of their weakness. The Punjab is a strange province with many peculiarities. It is sometimes said that I get annoyed with the Punjab and chide the Punjabis. That may be so, but I would add that every province and people have their own peculiarities. I would assure my Punjabi friends that chiding or rebuking for shortcomings can be given only when there exists intimacy and my rebukes to you are always a kind of affection for you. I feel myself closely connected with the Punjab, because my mother was a Punjabi and I used to come and stay in the Punjab in my younger days.

One thing, however, which I do not like is the way people or leaders of a province like the Punjab go about asking favours from the British rulers. It does not look nice to me that such distinguished leaders as Master Tara Singh should ask for favours from the Government.<sup>2</sup> We must unite and carve our own destiny.

What we are doing just at present has no vital bearing on the larger issues which are before the country and which have to be studied and

1. Speech at a reception given by Punjab legislators, Simla, 13 July 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 14 July, *The Hindustan Times*, 14 July and *The Statesman*, 14 July 1945.
2. On 24 July 1945, Master Tara Singh said that the Sikhs were inclined to accept the Wavell plan and were satisfied with the offer of one seat on the new Executive Council.



solved in an international setting. Soon after our release we have taken up a position from which there is no easy escape, but probably there may be an early escape. It is not a matter of pride that we should be waiting on the representative of a foreign power. We should ourselves settle our fate. Unfortunately, circumstances are not helping us. However, world forces are moving in the right direction and we shall soon win our independence.

Taking a perspective view of historical developments, one can find India in a highly evolved stage. I have been studying India and the Indian people. Two things strike me most. First, in spite of their differences in language and culture, an essential unity marks the Indians. No matter to what part of India they belong, they bear the same mark of oneness which has created in them an emotional loyalty for their country. Secondly, in spite of their poverty, the people, even from the villages, bear the stamp of the common Indian civilisation. This characteristic is found even among the labourers in Ceylon who have gone from Madras. When I once mentioned this fact to Mr. Rajagopalachari I was struck by his reply. He said: "Why should not those Madras labourers have that mark when they have behind them a 2000 years old civilization." While one notices a common hallmark of civilization, one also is amazed at the rich diversity in language and dress and even in culture, something which foreigners belonging to a much younger civilization can neither understand nor appreciate. Despite the material differences, the people have carried on, not only social but also trade relations among themselves and with the outside world.

I refuse to accept the contention of European historians that Europe has always ruled and dominated Asia. Alexander's back was broken by small Indian chiefs and he was the first European invader of India. It is wrong to say that Alexander swept over India. Alexander was not faced by any of the big rulers in India. The smaller chiefs caused his defeat. Of course, I am prepared to concede that Alexander had many disadvantages. The Roman Empire was never a world empire. It was only confined to the coastal regions of the Mediterranean; China and India were far greater than the Roman Empire when that empire was at its highest peak. England or Europe never dominated Asia before excepting, of course, during the last 200 years. We all want to end this domination, which has been the result of our own weakness.

One immediate and visible result of the present war has been that Europe is no longer a dominant power and there is no European country which now rules. Of course, when I say this I exclude Russia and America. These are the two real powers and every other European country is now basking in their favours. They depend on the power

Russia and America wield. People may ask: What makes Europe great? It is new vitality and the use of science.

While it is correct that England is the mother country of the British Dominions, it is ridiculous to say that England is the mother country of India. The fact is that India is the mother country of the countries in South East Asia. She has had thousands of years of intimate political and trade relations with Asiatic countries like Persia, Arabia, China, Siam and Indo-China. Unfortunately India's contact with them disappeared with the advent of British rule, but these relations are now reviving. The Chinese, for instance, are beginning to take interest in the Indian people and so also the people of the countries of South East and West Asia.

I hope that in the new balance of power which will come into being after the war, Asiatic nations will play their great part in human civilization and progress, and India will find her proper place. Recent developments in the international sphere point to a more intimate and closer cooperation between India and Asiatic countries in the economic and political spheres. They must get together for the purpose of common security, mutual intercourse and self-defence. This unity of Asiatic countries is not desired for subjugating other countries, but to resist aggression against any Asian country. All the Asian countries are now deprived of the opportunity, even to meet together for discussing their own affairs. About 12 or 13 years ago they could not find a place for holding a conference of oppressed nations except, of course, in Hitler's Berlin, which was the only place then available for such a conference. The tide has now turned. We are now turning a new page in our history. This is not to attack any European country but to create a new life and vitality. In the creation of this unity India must play its great role.

## 20. A Clash of Outlooks<sup>1</sup>

I am naturally disappointed that all these efforts should have ended in this way.<sup>2</sup> But, being myself a somewhat hard-boiled politician, I am

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 14 July 1945. Based on reports from the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 15 July, *The Leader*, 15 July and *The Hindustan Times*, 15 July 1945.
2. The Viceroy broke up the Simla Conference after Jinnah opposed the nomination by the Congress of a Muslim to the Executive Council.



not terribly dejected about anything. What really distresses me is not just the result or want of result of this conference, but the background in which our problems are usually considered. They ultimately resolve themselves into some aspect of the communal problem.

Fundamentally, the communal problem as well as many other problems, if you analyse them, become a kind of conflict between medievalism and modernism, between the medieval outlook and the modern outlook. Obviously, it is not a question of a seat or a job here and there.

The Congress represents, more than any other group, the modern outlook, politically and economically, and if I may say so, nationally and internationally. The Muslim League, as any other communal organisation, inevitably represents not only the particular claims of a group, but represents them in a medieval context.

Politics considered in terms of religious communities is wholly inconsistent with both democracy and any modern conception of politics or economics. There lies the real rub. To give in to this medieval conception is to throw back the whole course of development in India, political and economic, and try to build a structure which does not fit in with the realities of today in any department of life. You can never ignore realities for long and if you try to do so, you do so at your peril.

This is the essence of the communal problem, so far as I am concerned, and not a question of services or jobs or anything else, and India will have to decide, if not today, either tomorrow or the day after, whether it is going to be a democratic modern country or an undemocratic medieval country. The latter choice is wholly ruled out because it just cannot be done by any country today.

The normal choice for countries today is not between medievalism and democracy, but what may be called just political democracy or something more, that is, economic democracy also, which means socialism in some form or other.

At the back of all these superficial conflicts, which are sometimes represented by individuals, are, of course, impersonal forces at work. Lord Wavell, for instance, occupies a leading position as the Viceroy and no doubt his personality counts. Gandhiji or the Congress President also occupies a leading position and what they may say or do, counts. So also Mr. Jinnah. But, behind all these individuals are those impersonal forces which both control and push on these individuals. Lord Wavell ultimately must function within the limits of the British policy. Congressmen must function within the limits of Indian nationalism and Indian independence. What Mr. Jinnah's urges and initiatives are, I am not competent to say. So, it is not a question really of individual *bona fides* in the matter, but the conflict of impersonal forces,



primarily the British power in India and Indian nationalism and, secondly, certain medieval urges in India in addition to various fear complexes and modern progressive tendencies.

Question: Is it your point that the basic British policy in India is to hang on to power at any cost, and that if there is a conflict, British policy must be in opposition to Indian nationalism?

Jawaharlal Nehru: There is a fundamental conflict between British imperialism and Indian nationalism, but circumstances and many new factors have changed this policy. I do think that the world situation, as it is today and as it will be tomorrow, is exercising a powerful pressure on British policy so that it might come to some terms with the Indian people. These terms the British would like to be as favourable as possible to British interests in India. This is natural, but I think they must realise that the old order in India cannot possibly continue, even though Mr. Churchill would like it to continue.

Q: Are all Muslims medieval?

JN: I do not mean that the average member of the Muslim League is medieval. I think there are many progressive people in the Muslim League who, once the lid of medievalism is removed, will become political radicals.

It happens in the circumstances of today that certain questions have been made to cover up and obscure all the really important political and economic issues in the country. That happens sometimes.

What are the important issues, after all? The first issue in India is the agrarian problem. Allied to it is the industrial problem. You cannot solve the land problem without solving the industrial problem. They are locked and interlocked into each other. These are fundamental questions which apply to the Hindu and the Muslim alike. The misfortune is that they get covered up by certain complexes and prejudices, which, however superficial they may be, become formidable obstacles at the moment.

The so-called communal problem in India has no deep roots. By this I do not deny its importance at the present stage. It is very important, but it has nevertheless no deep roots and, therefore, I do not think that a solution of it will take a long time once it gets going. When the medieval lid is removed, immediately the real problems of the day will come up, and they affect both the Hindus and Muslims.

In the Islamic countries of the Middle East, where the Indian National Congress has made no propaganda, there is a better appreciation of the standpoint of the Congress because it fits in with their political ideals in spite of the natural sympathy that the people of those countries may feel for their co-religionists in India. The Turks, for instance, detest the conversion of politics into a chequer board of religion.

I invite foreign correspondents, in particular, to think what will happen if America, for instance, is divided into electoral constituencies for Catholics, Protestants, Methodists, Jews and various other Christian sects. You cannot imagine any democratic system based on such a thing. Yet, that is what is happening in India today. Inevitably you will have a situation in which each community with its separate electorates thinks in terms of its special group interests. If you have separate electorates in any country under the sun, you will have problems worse than the communal problem of India.

Q: Are Muslims a separate nation?

JN: I admit that the present circumstances may produce not a separate nation, but a group which is very anti-national. It may be considered a separate nation. Such a thing may develop. But the real thing is that today it is beside the point to talk about nations as such. The modern tendency is for the idea of a nation not to be confused with the idea of a state. The biggest countries today are multi-national.

If it pleases Mr. Jinnah to consider himself as belonging to a separate nation, then the matter ends. He can call himself by that name. But it does not solve any problem. Even supposing there are two, three or four nations in India, the problem is how are they to get along together?

Q: Mr. Jinnah stated to me categorically that his Pakistan will be cent per cent a modern and democratic state and there will be no restriction on ground of caste or creed or religion and everyone in Pakistan will be enjoying full and unrestricted citizenship.

JN: That is also the ideal of the Congress. If the two have the same goal why should not there be joint efforts made jointly?

Q: The Muslims fear a Hindu majority; how are the fears to be disarmed?

JN: You cannot disarm fear. It is a complex which may require psycho-analytical treatment. It is an odd thing that it has been said, by



some prominent members of the Muslim League, including Mr. Jinnah, that the Muslims are warriors and heroes and if the British rule had not been there they could have dominated others. On the other hand, they talk of fear of being dominated by the majority. It is absurd to talk of anyone dominating eighty or ninety millions of people. The whole idea is fantastic. My way of thinking is entirely different from Mr. Jinnah's.

Q: Muslims do not fear Hindu might but Hindu votes.

JN: The vote is after all a feeble substitute for might. If eighty or ninety million Muslims do not fear Hindu might, could they fear Hindu votes? Can Pakistan solve the communal problem? According to the League every Muslim is a Pakistani. Consequently, if Pakistan is established, every Muslim in Hindustan will be a foreigner as will be every Hindu in Pakistan. Hindus and Muslims are living mixedly in India's seven lakh villages. If Pakistan is established, it will worsen the communal problem, far from solving it. The Congress takes a rational stand and makes it clear that territorial and not communal sovereignty can be envisaged when India is independent.

Q: What is your reaction to the news that Lord Wavell had told Jinnah that he would include four Muslim Leaguers and one Unionist on the Executive Council?

JN: It is for Mr. Jinnah and Lord Wavell to react to it. It is not my concern.

Q: What is the way out of the present deadlock?

JN: There may be many ways out of the present situation. Obviously one way out, which for the moment is not available, is for the third party to retire from the scene, either factually or theoretically. I mean there should be no question of the third party imposing its will, and other parties should realise that they have to face the issues themselves without that third party. Then they will face realities and the consequences of the absence of a solution for the deadlock. Or, in the alternative — obviously, a very desirable alternative — other parties should pull together.

The other possible course really depends on the growth of almost overwhelming strength of one or more groups which pull together so that their influence may be felt by all the remaining groups.



Lastly, there might well be a complete collapse, owing to the deterioration of the economic situation, and that might lead partly to chaos and partly to revolt and revolution in various parts of the country. In spite of much money having been made at the top, India is fairly on the verge of collapse.

Q: Will the Indian National Congress, after India has turned out to be a modern democratic state, continue to function?

JN: I do not visualise that in its present form the Congress would survive. Its function is likely to come to an end as soon as Indian independence is won.

Q: Would you advise the Congress to demand a general election?

JN: The Congress is always for the election, but you should know that the Congress is still an illegal body. A large number of its members are still in jail and in the United Provinces, even now five Congressmen cannot meet together without hitting the Defence of India Rules.<sup>3</sup> The election, if it comes when the normal situation is restored, will be always welcomed by the Congress.

3. The District Magistrate of Allahabad had issued a notification banning public processions and meetings in Allahabad district, from 9 to 15 August 1945, without his permission obtained 72 hours in advance.

## 21. The Character of the Muslim League<sup>1</sup>

He was quite friendly. We talked for an hour and a quarter. His main theme was that Congress represented a modern nationalist tendency — the League a medieval and separatist one. He showed no special bitterness against Jinnah and the League, admitted that there was a psychological fear of Hindu domination, but claimed that it was unreal and

1. Three accounts by Wavell of his interview with Jawaharlal at Simla on 14 July 1945 are printed.

unwarranted though he admitted that there was a section of Hindus out for complete Hindu domination. He did not put forward any special solution of the problem. He is more of a theorist than a practical politician but earnest and I am sure honest.<sup>2</sup>

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...I had a final interview with Nehru on the afternoon of 14th July after the conference had ended, and told him I thought that Jinnah's influence and obstinacy were due to a genuine fear among the ordinary Muslims of the Congress and its propaganda. Nehru said he thought the Muslims had not really been ill-treated by the Congress Governments during the years 1937-39, but he admitted that some of the Congress Hindus were anti-Muslim, and that the psychological factors were important. He said that the Congress was at least an attempt at a nationalist organisation of a modern kind, while the Muslim League stood for an almost medieval conception of communal interest. Nehru was friendly, but had no constructive suggestions to make.<sup>3</sup>

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...the theme of his discourse was that Congress represented a modern nationalistic point of view and the League a narrow medieval conception, and that the eventual cleavage when India's freedom was secured would be between poor and rich, between peasant and landlord, between labour and employer.<sup>4</sup>

2. Wavell's note, 14 July 1945. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. V, p. 1249.
3. Wavell to Amery, 16 July 1945. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. V, p. 1266.
4. Wavell: *The Viceroy's Journal*, (London, 1973) p. 155.

## 22. On his Talks with the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>

In my talks with the Viceroy I hardly referred to the Simla Conference, though there were some allusions to it. We talked in terms of the background of the Indian situation. Even previously, when I met the

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 14 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 15 July 1945.

Viceroy about a week or more ago, there was no reference, or hardly any, to the conference. Naturally, I said that as far as the conference matters were concerned our President had discussed them. I discussed all manner of problems, including some subjects which are dear to me, like planning in India.

### 23. No Cause for Despondency<sup>1</sup>

I thank the Congressmen of Simla for the arrangements they have made for the leaders who have come to attend the Simla Conference.

This day, it is a month, since I have been released from the Almora jail. We have been naturally anxious to see that thousands of our comrades are also released like us. But we did not demand their release as a condition for attending the Simla Conference because we wanted to give a fair deal to the intentions of those who have invited us to the conference. We did not want to be accused of being a stumbling block. I am not at all worried over the failure of the conference. I am, however, glad that the Congress has done its duty. I am not prepared to apportion any responsibility anywhere but there is no cause for despondency because the conference has failed. The Wavell plan and the conference are just one of the many methods which the Congress sought to utilise for the ultimate attainment of independence. I advise you not to give way to despair on account of the failure of the conference, but to continue your efforts to achieve independence. The Congress leaders attended the conference in good faith and the Congress played its part very well to make the conference a success. But such conferences are not the end. Our goal is clear. Even if the conference had succeeded the result would have been comparatively very little. Now that the conference has failed I want my countrymen to be ready to traverse the path which any peace loving people have to traverse, which any country that wants to reach the goal of independence has to traverse. This goal of independence is near now. I ask you to be ready to achieve this goal.

1. Speech at Simla, 15 July 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 16 July and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17 July 1945.



I don't know when I shall come again to Simla. I must say that the affection you have shown me is unforgettable, indeed. I can never forget the love you have shown me today.

## 24. On Excluded Areas<sup>1</sup>

We are in complete agreement with you.<sup>2</sup> We do not want any excluded area in our country.

I assure you that the Congress has always kept the question in view and you can safely rely on the Congress to look to the interest of everybody in the country.

1. Talk with a representative of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Simla, 15 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 July 1945.
2. A delegation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bengal represented to the Viceroy against a Government proposal of creating a north eastern frontier province of which the Chittagong Hill Tracts would form a part.

## 25. Slums in Simla<sup>1</sup>

Of my various engagements during these two eventful weeks in Simla, not the least in importance was my visit to the scavengers' quarters in the city. A city is not judged by its palaces and broad avenues. A truer measure is the condition of its humbler citizens, their houses and quarters, and their standard of living.

Scavengers, who perform the most essential tasks in our society, have by a perverse fate and an unjust social order, been placed at the bottom of the social scale. It is upto us to change this completely by raising

1. Statement to the press, Simla, 16 July 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 17 July 1945.



OUTSIDE MAHATMA GANDHI'S RESIDENCE AT JUHU, JUNE 1945



AT SIMLA, JULY 1945



them and bettering their conditions. I was shocked to see the quarters of the scavengers. The situation was bad, the tiny rooms were dark and damp and often I could not make out how so many people could possibly live in such a restricted space. In a little room of about ten feet by eight there was a family of ten. Cooking, bathing etc., have all to take place inside this room or cell.

The contrast between this and the noble mansions and gardens of the prosperous classes in Simla is startling, and most painful to contemplate. The Simla Municipality, as being especially responsible for this state of affairs, ought to be ashamed. But all of us who live in palaces and mansions of Simla must share that shame. I hope the municipality and the citizens of Simla will endeavour to put an end to this iniquity.

## 26. The Absurdity of Partition<sup>1</sup>

I am opposed to the division of India not because I have some sentimental attachment to united India. It is my progressive and modern mind that makes me believe that united India can make us a powerful state. A division of India is likely to create weak satellite states which will depend on big adjoining states for existence. My idea is not to create a second Iran<sup>2</sup> and Iraq<sup>3</sup> in India, which could be overrun by a big power in a day. A divided India will be like Iraq and Iran, which, in fact, are not sovereign but just satellite powers, at the mercy of great nations.

Secondly, partition will not solve the communal problem. It may, instead, intensify it. In both the zones, minorities will remain. Mr

1. Address to press conference, Lahore, 17 July 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, *The Statesman*, *The Times of India*, *The Hindustan Times*, and *The Leader*, 18 July 1945.
2. In the Second World War, Iran proclaimed her neutrality, but in 1941 Britain and Russia requested rights of transit through Iranian territory. Permission having been refused, the two powers occupied Iran till 1946.
3. By a treaty with Britain, Iraq became independent in 1930, but the British retained rights to two airbases and freedom of transit for their armed forces. The British occupation force was responsible for foiling a pro-Axis coup in 1941. In January 1943, Iraq declared war on Germany.

Jinnah's fear of the Hindu majority in a centralised national government is based on his medieval trend of thought. No country can be divided on a religious basis. Nobody ever thought of the Catholic or Protestant majorities in western democratic countries. Yet Catholics and Protestants live together in the same nation. This is a point over which everyone should ponder seriously. This is a poser to the Muslim League also.

At the same time, I think that the Pakistan demand is being pressed by a majority of Muslims in north-west and east of India only. But the Punjab's problem will remain unsolved. The demand of the Muslim League logically presumes a division of the Punjab. But here Hindus and Sikhs, who form nearly half the population and are in a majority in the eastern districts, will never go over to Pakistan. The Punjab, moreover, is a cultural unit and even Punjab Muslims will resent the vivisection of their province. This objection also applies to Bengal. As far as I can see, the Punjabis or Bengalis, whether Muslims or Hindus, will never like their provinces, which are homogeneous linguistic units, to be divided.<sup>4</sup> This proposition will appear disagreeable to them. At the same time you cannot force them to go with Pakistan.

My fourth objection is that Pakistan is injurious to the best interests of the Muslims themselves. However, if those areas which have predominant Muslim majorities are utterly bent on separation no power on earth can stop them. But I shall try my best to convince all that separation is not in the interest of anyone, certainly not of the Muslims.

The Muslim League's approach itself is self-contradictory. You cannot cut the head with the idea of restoring it. Pakistan is an inconceivable proposition, but I am not compelling anyone to accept this view by a bludgeon.

Question: Can you suggest a remedy?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Separate electorates must go. All the present communal troubles in India are due to separate electorates. They can go only by our consent and not by force. In the present historical background, safeguards will have to be provided for the protection of minority interests. Such safeguards are essential features of every democratic system of government. But here, in India, the process is reversed. Here, landlords and capitalists want safeguards. This is absurd.

4. There were 12,000,000 non-Muslims out of a population of 28,000,000 in Punjab. In Bengal the Muslims were just over half the population and in Assam only about one-third.

My solution to the communal problem is that there should be semi-independent autonomous provinces with all possible protection to the minorities — cultural, linguistic and religious. The Muslims should not forget that the Congress has conceded separation by its Bombay resolution of 1942 to any territorial unit provided it is sought by a clear and definite majority. I do not see any contradiction between that resolution and that of Jagat Narain which was considered earlier at Allahabad.<sup>5</sup>

Q: Now that the Simla Conference has failed would the Congress reform<sup>6</sup> ministries in the provinces?

JN: The resumption of ministries is not a question of opinion, but it depends on the conditions prevailing in the country. The Congress will not form governments in the provinces now, as suitable circumstances do not exist. If suitable circumstances existed, all could be done, but I do not think these circumstances exist at present.

Q: Do you think that communal unity is necessary before political freedom?

JN: Theoretically it is not essential. The removal of untouchability and a settlement between Hindus and Muslims will obviously make India's freedom battle end earlier. Unity and social equality are the foundation of a progressive and stable state. A country is strong if there is social equality and if good relations subsist among the various groups. Unity as embodied in the Muslim League's demands breaks the very meaning of unity. The League's approach is based on disunity and on a medieval conception of society.

Q: Can you define medievalism?

5. This had been a counter resolution to Rajagopalachari's resolution accepting Pakistan in principle. It declared any proposal to give liberty to any province to secede from India as detrimental to Indian interests and therefore unacceptable.
6. The Congress, which had resigned office in October 1939, could have returned to office as soon as the war was over. But the Muslim League had demanded that in no circumstances should the Congress be allowed to resume office before fresh elections. Meanwhile, some Governors, as in Bihar, had dissolved the provincial legislatures, seven months before the election.



JN: By medievalism, I mean, a religious group functioning as a political party. The Muslim League is a religious party whose membership is confined to the group from which others are excluded.

Mr. Jinnah's latest proposition is that the Muslim League alone can represent the Muslims in India. But the Congress has a national foundation. Its political programme is to fight for the complete independence of all, irrespective of caste or creed. Its doors are open to all. It is now impossible for the Congress to shift from this foundation. If it does so it will die. This Congress — this old Congress for which we all have laboured — cannot do this. But if, even after giving the price for unity, that unity still remains far away, then that has no meaning. Obviously, the Hindu-Muslim question is an obstruction, but to say that freedom cannot come unless there is Hindu-Muslim unity is incorrect.

However, unless it is achieved there will be constant obstruction to the running of a government. So, if communal unity is achieved beforehand, nothing like that. But political freedom can come even before that unity is achieved.

Q: Is the *charkha* creed medieval or modern?

JN: As chairman of the National Planning Committee I can say that however fast the pace of industrialisation may be it has been decided that cottage industries should never be neglected.

Q: Was Lord Wavell sincere in making his proposals?

JN: Lord Wavell is sincere and even Mr. Churchill is sincere. I do not understand this talk about sincerity though I do not accept everybody's sincerity. Lord Wavell is not a free agent. He represents the policy of the British Government and there is no question of his sincerity or insincerity. Wavell obviously wanted the Simla Conference to succeed. But the policy of the British Government is guided by numerous other factors. Among them are reactionary civilians and Governors, foreign relations and the world situation. If the Simla Conference had succeeded it would have enhanced his prestige. His breaking up of the conference is in accordance with the British Government policy.

Q: Would you like the Congress in the Punjab to work with the Unionist Government against the Muslim League?

JN: My advice to the Congressmen here is that they should stand on their own legs and oppose everyone who stands in their way. The Congress will like to have general elections.

Q: Now that the Simla Conference has failed, what is the future programme of the Congress?

JN: The Congress will take stock of the whole situation as it has developed since 1942. It will lay emphasis on the work of reorganisation keeping in view the present day problems. The whole face of the country has changed and we have to reorganise the Congress in this light. We have also to study how these three years have affected public opinion and public temper. I find that the public mind has been powerfully affected and people's hearts have been steelled.

Q: Does reorganisation mean expulsion of such elements as are opposed to the official Congress policy?

JN: Although I did not have this in mind when discussing reorganisation, it obviously includes this question also.

Q: Is it true that you had suggested that everybody outside the Congress was a traitor?

JN: It is ridiculous to say that I had suggested that everybody outside the Congress was a traitor. I never made this statement. It is absurd. I said some days ago that when a war was on, and the Congress leaders were in jail, the Communists went over to the other side and created a gulf between themselves and the national sentiment.

I also draw your attention to the distressing fact that the long-term political prisoners who have in some cases completed their life terms are still in prison. It is scandalous that the *Komagatamaru* prisoners are still in jail after 31 years.<sup>7</sup> Either it is sheer forgetfulness on the part of the authorities or it is vengeance. I hope that now at any rate the Government will release forthwith these prisoners who have been detained for such a long time and also those who are sick in jails. I may also refer to the situation in Bikaner State, where, according to telegrams I have received, peasants and Praja Mandal workers are being put

7. In 1914 the ship, *Komagatamaru*, sailed from Hong Kong to Vancouver with 35 Sikhs and 21 Muslims. When it arrived at Vancouver a majority of emigrant passengers could not comply with Canadian laws and were not permitted to land. It remained in the harbour for two months and was finally driven out by force of arms. It sailed back to India and berthed at Budge-Budge. The passengers were not allowed to enter Calcutta but were ordered to board a train bound for Punjab. They refused and in a clash with the police 18 persons were killed including some policemen. They were all then arrested.

to untold hardship due to repression by the Government.<sup>8</sup> I hope the authorities there will take immediate action to relieve the tension.

8. In July 1945, Praja Mandal workers and kisans of certain villages were arrested by the Bikaner State authorities following their agitation for responsible government and agrarian and economic reforms.

## 27. In Defence of the August Rising<sup>1</sup>

For a brief comparison of the great events of 1942, we shall have to go back 88 years to the time of the historic Indian rising of 1857. I am very proud of what happened in 1942. I would have been very sorry indeed if people had tamely submitted to the British Government. That would have been a sign of cowardice and would have undone the work of decades. It was a mighty and staggering phenomenon to see a helpless people spontaneously rise in despair without any leader or organisation or preparation or arms. They bravely suffered, endured and sacrificed many things. They could no longer tolerate the humiliation and misery heaped upon them by the ruling power.

It is easy for armchair critics to find fault with that rising. May be, there were things which cannot be approved or justified. But those who criticised the happenings and who tried to mislead the people are cowards. I make it plain that I cannot condemn those who took part in the 1942 movement.

The poor kisans, their hearts aglow with the desire for freedom, were oppressed and tortured by the police and the military. Nothing much happened in the Punjab, but in my own province, as in Bihar and Bengal and in most parts of the country, a series of black deeds were perpetrated. Hundreds of villages were destroyed and burnt, and the very patches of land which they tilled with ploughs were also destroyed.

The people made mistakes; they erred and faltered, but they moved on. They refused to be subdued despite the terrible repression. At thousands of places, the police and the military fired at them, but they

1. Speech at Lahore, 17 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 18 July 1945.



braved all this. No doubt the Nazis of Germany were very brutal, but to match their deeds one can find quite a good many in India.

In the Punjab, it was a different story. Nothing much happened here, but the seemingly popular Government behaved in a strange fashion towards Congressmen.<sup>2</sup> In a cold and calculating manner it did many things against human dignity. I pity it, but I pity all the more those Congressmen and Congress leaders who submitted to those things willingly. The dignity of the Congress requires that even its volunteers should not bow before a Government official.

The story of the Simla Conference is now ended. I cannot say what will happen in the future. But we have to judge the Simla episode from a correct perspective. If you lie around a little mound, it may well look a mountain.

I am sorry that the Simla Conference has failed. Do not worry because it has failed. But had it succeeded, the results would have been different. Of course, the conference did not propose to solve any of the big problems of India. It only opened a little window through which we could see some way of solving those problems. We thought we might make good use of that window. To the Executive Council, we could have sent the best men.

The conference did not fail because of the Congress. There might be several reasons for the failure. It may be the Viceroy. It may be the Muslim League. But it has failed despite the fact that we wanted it to succeed.

No country in the world has a government so corrupt and inefficient as we have in India. Nepotism and bribery are rampant everywhere. From top to bottom the Government seems to have no qualms of conscience about it. Indians and the British are all mixed up in it. And we are ashamed of the part of those Indians. They seem to have no moral responsibility towards their people.

The Congress, unlike the communal organisations, has to look upon the many problems in a thousand ways from both national and international viewpoints. They have to find out and judge the social or economic effects that the solutions of these problems would produce. But the Muslim League has only to think of Muslims, the Sikh organisation of only the Sikhs.

It may not be unreasonable to think in this manner, but the Congress has to think of all, not only of Indians but also of other subject

2. During the years from 1942 to 1945 the Unionist Government of the Punjab had detained many Congressmen without trial and prohibited several Congress legislators from attending the Assembly.

peoples who are groaning under the heels of imperialism. The communal organisations once in a while discuss international affairs but I wonder whether they really understand them. The Congress always keeps before it the big picture of the world.

I refer to the state of Burma, Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Indo-China, the Philippines and other countries overrun by Japan, and ask whether Dutch, British, French and American imperialism is not again to throttle the people of these lands after the Japanese have been driven out from there.

The Congress will not tolerate this. Mr. Amery's White Paper<sup>3</sup> on Burma is of no use. This is not the solution. Our struggle is but a part of the struggle of all the suppressed peoples, and we are not to lose sight of this fact.

Among the many immediate and pressing problems, one is that of settling twenty lakh soldiers returning from the war. The old-fashioned British Government is incompetent to solve this problem. They may praise the Indian army now, but it is impossible for them to solve the problem. Only a national government which understands their aspirations and desires can meet their needs.

Our present programme in connection with Congress reorganisation is to set our organisation in order. Organisation is a strong weapon. If it has blunted, we must sharpen it.

I severely criticise the disruption<sup>4</sup> in the Punjab Congress. Punjab Congressmen must end all party factions which are based on personalities rather than principles. Wipe out such men as those who create disruption and disorganisation with a broomstick.

A large number of political prisoners are likely to be released. The Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners have been in jail for 17 years.<sup>5</sup> Some of them are being kept in the United Provinces as prisoners of the Punjab Government. I hope the Punjab Government will release them as early as possible.

3. Issued on 17 May 1945, it promised Burma self-government within the Commonwealth. It would be effected by 1948 in three stages.

4. The Punjab Congress Workers Assembly, formed to implement the Congress constructive programme, and the official office-holders of the Congress under Mian Iftikharuddin, had functioned as rival organisations and quarrelled over such issues as on the choice of a candidate for a by-election in Lahore. Their dissensions had led to the resignation of some leaders including Gopichand Bhargava from the party.

5. In Punjab, prisoners sentenced to transportation for life were released after they had undergone 11 years in jail including remission earned by them. But at least five of the accused of the Lahore conspiracy case who were arrested in 1929-30 were still in jail.



## 28. The Tasks Ahead<sup>1</sup>

Our programme is to win freedom for our country. That is our goal, our destination, our target and our objective. Our main issue is to eliminate poverty from our country as soon as possible. The Punjabis cannot possibly visualise a true picture of poverty prevailing in other parts of India and the pitiable condition of the masses, as the middle classes in the Punjab are reported to have reaped a good harvest during the war while this is not the case in other provinces, where, barring a few people at the top, others have been ruined by the war. Picture before you the condition of Bengal where 30 to 40 lakhs of people met their end following an unprecedented famine. That province suffered an unheard of disaster and it will take several years to return to its normal conditions. Such things have not happened in any other part of the world.

I have passed the last few days in the Punjab. Simla is an integral part of the Punjab, but has assumed the role of a central town during the last fortnight or so. I am overwhelmed by the zeal and enthusiasm manifested by the people of the Punjab during the last two days when I have been actually in the Punjab. An enormous enthusiasm of the people has been witnessed during my brief sojourn at Lahore and at all wayside stations throughout the night where huge crowds had gathered at odd hours to accord welcome to their leaders. This clearly indicates that the people have real thirst and hunger for political freedom which they have not been able to secure in spite of their struggle during the last so many years.

It also appears that they have not been able, for long, to get an opportunity to show their real regard for the Congress for which they have now deep affection in their hearts.

During all this time, as the political life in the country has been practically at a standstill, the people have naturally become impatient. The events of the last three years when Congress leaders were behind the bars, are now before my eyes, although whatever I learned has been

1. Speech at Rawalpindi, 18 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 19 July 1945.



through papers or through friends who have been outside jail. Whatever has happened in 1942 in the United Provinces, Bihar, parts of Bengal and other parts of India, it has made a tremendous effect on the spirit of the general public. But the Punjab has gained no such experience. It is absolutely not possible for you to correctly weigh or measure the tremendous effect which those events have on the life of the average Indian.

One specific question which is being asked from us everywhere, ever since our release from jail, is what programme and policy the Congress has chalked out for the people to attain freedom. The Congress has one programme and one aim and that is the freedom of the country.

Settling the Congress policy and future programme has a direct bearing on the minds of the general masses and is not a commodity which can be purchased or discussed on paper. To answer the question correctly it is essential to gauge the true picture of India.

At the Simla Conference, the Congress played its part admirably well to end the stalemate as conditions in the country are most deplorable and require immediate and sympathetic handling. In spite of our sincere efforts, we have not succeeded, but there is no ground for despondency and despair. We should bear in mind that the Simla Conference is not such a panacea as can solve the entire problem of India's independence, although, if successful, it could have proved a long stride in our march towards our destination. The success of the Conference would certainly have removed an important hurdle in our path and made our journey to the goal a bit easier.

I emphasise that it is essential to understand harder international problems of the day with a view to having a clear grasp of the present day Indian politics. The Indian National Congress is the only body which has acquired the habit to think internationally and to link Indian affairs with world problems and issues. Other communal bodies in the country consider the problem only in a limited sphere taking into view the interests of a particular community they like to represent.

I stress that happenings in America, China and Russia have undoubtedly a profound effect on Indian problems. The war in Europe, which has just terminated, has brought revolutionary changes and new problems of peace in all countries freed from the Nazi yoke. Meagre press reports do not reveal the true picture of what has been happening in Europe. Similarly the end of the war with Japan will bring in its turn new problems for Asiatic countries which have hitherto been under Japanese domination.

I severely criticise the Punjab Congress leaders for picking up quarrels and stirring up disputes because of mere personal and factional considerations. The most latent energy of the Punjab is being wasted in party squabbles and is not being used in the best interests of the country as a whole. I plead for making up their differences in the interest of the nation and for utilising this brief interim period of two months to prepare the ground for the next big programme which the Congress is about to launch in the very near future.

I am immensely satisfied with the enthusiasm displayed by the Punjabis. I appeal to all those who are taking keen interest in Congress affairs to strengthen the organisation and be up and doing. If one lakh of volunteers from the Punjab's remotest villages in addition to big towns join the Congress movement, it will gain much impetus. The High Command will certainly help to avoid factions. The people also should join in this effort with that objective. You should mind your own work and should not put any obstacle in the way of others doing their work according to their own notions. Indiscipline, seen now at all levels, and noisy slogans will not bring Swaraj nearer. Rather they will hamper the progress of the country.

An organised people do their task silently. But slogans and indiscipline do not strengthen the organisation. These matters count much in the eyes of foreigners, who are present in the country in large numbers.

A new class of millionaires has cropped up as a result of the widely prevailing corruption in the ranks of the officials and illicit profiteering of the business classes. Even ordinary police officials and others of the various new departments have made lakhs of rupees since the enactment of control measures. The Government has entrusted them with vast powers to squeeze out money from the public. This class is a menace to the society and to the nation at large. The atmosphere in India has become so unhealthy that even well-intentioned persons have fallen a prey to it. No government, howsoever strong it may be, can, in my opinion, successfully handle the present situation without tacit and full popular support, which the administration lacks to a large degree. The Government, in spite of its best intentions, has become incapable of checking corruption among the rank and file and is shielding the police and other officials to save their faces. It can only succeed if it has the voluntary backing of the Indian people. I exhort the Congress workers to be prepared for a big step. Big events are expected to take place this year.



## 29. Freedom the Real Issue<sup>1</sup>

On account of its geographical position and climatic condition, Kashmir is the crown of India and Asia.

The movement of August 1942 and the Bengal famine bear deep relation to the question of Indian freedom. After 1857, the movement of 1942 has been the second attempt on the part of the people to get freedom for the country.

Keeping in view only official figures of 15 lakhs of deaths, the earning of the profiteers during the Bengal famine amounts roughly to Rs. 1,000 for one death. The then Government was responsible for that shameful waste of human lives.

The real problem of India is freedom. I think that as Hitler could not suppress the spirit of freedom among the conquered peoples of Europe, so also Mr. Churchill's desire to crush the Congress and Gandhiji has not been fulfilled.

1. Speech at Pahalgam, 22 July 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 July 1945.

## 30. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit<sup>1</sup>

\*\*\*<sup>2</sup> Simla was a strain. Partly because of the business in hand, but even more so because of the large numbers of friends and acquaintances whom I had not seen for years and was naturally anxious to meet. There were others, rajas and maharajas, whom I was not so anxious to meet who were continually pressing me to lunch or dine with them. From Simla I came straight to Kashmir, spending two sleepless nights on the way because of vast crowds at every railway station. It was extraordinary to see these people, emotionally wound up, deprived of outlets for three years, coming at all hours of the night and behaving almost hysterically. I was annoyed often enough but I was moved also

1. 26 July 1945. *The Voice of India* (America), October 1945.
2. Omission in the source.



by this pouring out of affection in such abundant measure. And so to Kashmir\*\*\*<sup>3</sup>

I can hardly discuss high politics in this letter. The subject is too long and intricate to be dealt with briefly. Still I might as well indicate to you (what you perhaps already know) that we decided to make every effort to make the Simla Conference a success. It was not an easy matter for us, for the past three years have affected our people very deeply, and, I think, changed them considerably. Intense passion has been aroused and the iron has entered the soul of large numbers of the Indian people. Something that happened in Ireland in the early twenties after the Black and Tan<sup>4</sup> episode is happening here, or rather, taking shape in the minds of men. I am not referring to the communal question here, though that is important enough in its own sphere. It is the purely political aspect I am dealing with here. Anyone who knows recent Irish history understands what I mean, and will be able to form some picture of what might happen in India in the future. Most outsiders are of course entirely ignorant, as they are of most other aspects, and judge superficially some outstanding questions like the communal question.

With this background it is not possible to drive the people beyond a certain limit. Yet we went far, very far, considering our whole background and especially the last three years which stand out in every Indian's mind. We did so because we considered the position today in all its aspects, national and international, and decided on this course. We went so far that we surprised our opponents and rather knocked them off their balance. Finding that the Congress was anxious to come to a temporary and interim settlement, the big guns of the I.C.S. were frightened and made every effort to sabotage such a settlement. They succeeded with the help of other forces. The communal question came to their help. There was, of course, no question of an odd seat here or an odd person there. The issues were deeper and involved, so far as we were concerned, a complete breaking of our national organisation. I think everyone, or almost everyone, recognised our *bona fides* in the matter and realised that we had made every effort to arrive at a settlement.

The situation is now fluid. I do not know how things will shape themselves. The Viceroy may take some further step, as he hinted, though what this will be I cannot say. Anyway, one thing is certain,

3. Omission in the source.

4. The British military irregulars who suppressed the Sinn Fein in Ireland.

that we cannot remain where we are. Changes in the situation this way or that are inevitable.

In such a situation it is obviously difficult for me to leave India. And yet it may be possible for me to do so. I am myself anxious to go abroad and especially to America. Whether the Government will come in the way of this or not, I do not know, but apart from that there are other hurdles. I have no illusions of so-called propaganda abroad, and even if I went abroad, I do not intend to plead for India's cause. I'm not going to sit on anybody's threshold and plead any cause. That just rubs me the wrong way. But I recognise the value of contacts and exchange of ideas in this changing world, and of ever keeping and thinking of India in the context of the world. If I go, therefore, it will be more to satisfy an inner psychological need than to influence others. And if I go, it can only be for a relatively short period. The pull of India and our people is too great for me to be absent for long, specially in these trying and changing times, when new problems and situations are continually arising.

You know that your work in the States has been very greatly appreciated here by all kinds of people.<sup>5</sup> You have done a splendid job, as no one else could have done in the circumstances. The immediate consequences may not be obvious, but I am sure the remoter ones will be considerable\*\*\*\*\*

5. Vijayalakshmi toured the United States explaining the Congress viewpoint. She was at San Francisco at the time of the United Nations conference.

6. Omission in the source.

### 31. On the Labour Party's Victory<sup>1</sup>

Obviously the tremendous victory<sup>2</sup> of the Labour Party in Britain in the general elections is an event of outstanding importance both in the domestic affairs of Britain and in international affairs.

I have greatly enjoyed this trek of ours in the higher valleys of Kashmir. This is not surprising, for I always enjoy such visits and had long looked

1. Interview to the press, Waniaram (Kashmir), 1 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 2 August and *The Tribune*, 2 August 1945.

2. On 26 July 1945 the Labour Party won the general election. A cabinet with Attlee as Prime Minister and Pethick-Lawrence as Secretary of State for India took office.

forward to it. I feel much better now and fresher in mind in spite of the difficult climbing we have made. For the pleasure of this trip I am indebted, of course, to the mountains and valleys of Kashmir, its glaciers, lakes and streams, its noble trees and innumerable variety of flowers. But I am also indebted to the careful arrangements made by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, who, as usual, left nothing to chance, and to my companions than whom I could have none better—Mr. Ghulam Mohammed Bakshi and Mr. Shamlal Kaul, who busied themselves with innumerable details of such a trip and left me and my daughter, Indira, to have the pleasure alone without any worry.

During these days I have often felt how selfish I was to be enjoying myself in this lovely mountain land when work demanded my presence elsewhere. Especially my place is in the United Provinces to attend important meetings of Congressmen that are being held there and to be present next week at the Liberty Week<sup>3</sup> celebrations in my province. But I got entangled in many important engagements here during the next few days and I must ask my colleagues of the United Provinces to excuse me and to be indulgent towards me in this matter.

In connection with the Liberty Week I would like to offer my homage to all those who have suffered in the struggle for India's freedom, especially during the last three years. I have no doubt that their suffering has not been in vain.

3. The Allahabad Congress Committee had decided to observe a liberty week from 9 August 1945, during which portraits of persons who were killed in Allahabad in the 1942 disturbances were to be unveiled by Jawaharlal.

### 32. To the Editor, *The Hindu*<sup>1</sup>

Gulmarg  
August 10, 1945

Sir,

Owing to my absence in the inner valleys of the Himalayas there has been delay in my dealing with the letter of Mr. Percy Macqueen which

1. This was published in *The Hindu* on 18 August 1945.



you were good enough to forward to me.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Macqueen is labouring under a misapprehension. I did not say anything about the British community in India or about Englishmen or Britishers generally. It is not my habit to raise racial issues. Indeed I have always laid stress on the fact that our quarrel was and is with the system of government and not with any particular race or nationality. I have further added that if that system of government continued even after the withdrawal of British dominance, that would give little freedom or relief to India.

What I said was that the British Government was ultimately responsible for the misdeeds of its officers, British and Indians, in the last quarter of 1942 and subsequently. In numbers, there were probably more Indian officers of the lower grades involved in this unsavoury business than Britishers. If Mr. Macqueen has any doubts about this I invite him to visit some eastern parts of my own Province or Behar, or for the matter of that many other parts of India, to investigate the matter.

I realise that every government considers it its first duty to maintain itself and to resist and suppress any attack upon it. Of that I made no complaint. But there are certain limits of decency and humanity which no government or its officers are supposed to transgress. All these limits were passed in those past years in India and numerous cases of the most inhuman and atrocious behaviour have come to light. A government which values its fair name should investigate all such charges and punish those who are found guilty. But our present Government is afraid of nothing more than of such an investigation and tries to prevent it.

For my part, what has happened in India, and whatever may happen, will not induce me to introduce racial issues into the argument. I came to the conclusion long ago that no race or people can be condemned wholesale, and I know too many decent and honourable Englishmen to cast the blame on them as a race or nationality. But that has nothing to do with my judgment on what happened in India from August 1942 onwards. None of us who experienced these years or have knowledge of the facts can ever forget what happened then.

Yours etc.,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. In a letter to *The Hindu* on 21 July 1945 Percy Macqueen, who had been a member of the Indian Civil Service and who was returning to England to retire after a long period of service in the Madras Province, criticised Jawaharlal's speech of 17 July 1945 at Lahore, as "a gratuitous insult to the British community in India."

### 33. Self-determination without Compulsion<sup>1</sup>

Partition cannot solve the question of India's freedom. Those who want to divide India shall have to convince all Indians of their move. I feel that partition will create innumerable boils on the body-politic of India.

It is harmful to partition a country. The tendency of the whole world is to forge unity. Partition will prove more harmful to those who agitate for it.

All these years I have been thinking on this very problem. So far I have avoided the subject. This was because I did not like to add to the misunderstanding already in existence.

A large number of Congressmen are opposed to the proposal to divide India because they are firmly convinced that the good of India, as well as the good of all communities in India, including the Muslims, will be imperilled.

Nevertheless, the Congress has, as far back as 1942, clearly stated that if it is the declared will of the inhabitants of any area to cut themselves adrift, it will not think in terms of compelling them against their wishes, subject only to the condition that in giving effect to this no other major group will be compelled against its will. So in essence, the principle of self-determination has been accepted by the Congress though, obviously, in giving effect to it all other considerations are to be borne in mind, especially the one that no group is to be forced against its interests or wishes. But, while agreeing to this principle, the Congress will do its utmost, by friendly means, to maintain the unity of India. This unity can ultimately be preserved only by the goodwill of the communities concerned, and not by compulsion. In the modern context of the world this is even more important than ever before.

The end of the war has ended the carnage. Hence a great relief. The future is, however, dark and probably all kinds of new problems will arise all over the world.

1. Address to Sikhs at Srinagar, 16 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 17 August, *The Times of India*, 18 August and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 August 1945.

In our country, the Defence of India Act has invaded every sphere of life during the past six years or more. This act will obviously have to go soon from all parts of India. This in itself will mean a considerable change.

I express my grave concern about the future of those Indians who joined the Indian National Army under Japanese auspices. About 20,000 of these Indians are in captivity. A large number of Sikhs form a part of this army. They thought that they would liberate India in this manner. I have always considered them misguided people, but have never doubted their patriotism. Their future fate is constantly troubling and paining me.

#### 34. On Mahendra Chowdhury's Execution<sup>1</sup>

I am deeply grieved to hear of Mahendra Chowdhury's execution.<sup>2</sup> Similar cases as in Chimur and Ashti<sup>3</sup> and in Jaunpur<sup>4</sup> in the United Provinces and elsewhere relating to occurrences in August 1942 have raised a passion of protest and appeal from all over India during past months. The fact that the deep-seated feeling of the Indian people is being ignored by the Government is significant and creates an atmosphere which will do no good to the relationship of India with Britain. Acts go much further than words however well intended these words might be.

1. Statement to the press, Srinagar, 16 August 1945. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19 August 1945.
2. Mahendra Chowdhury was executed on 7 August 1945 on a charge of murder and dacoity during the August disturbances in 1942.
3. Seven Chimur and Ashti case prisoners were convicted for the murder of two Government officers and six police constables during the 1942 disturbances. Their death sentences were commuted to transportation for life on 16 August 1945.
4. On 1 April 1943, one person was killed in a clash with the police in a village in Jaunpur district. On 24 October 1943, a collective fine of Rs. 41,600 was imposed on 46 villages in Jaunpur district for failure "to render all assistance to discover or apprehend offenders who were absconding."



**35. His Work in India<sup>1</sup>**

There is no truth whatsoever in the newspaper reports that I am flying to England or anywhere else.<sup>2</sup> I wish newspapermen would verify such reports from me before sending them out of India. My work at present lies in India and I shall not go out of it unless there is some urgent demand

1. Interview to the press, Srinagar, 17 August 1945. From *The Tribune*, 18 August 1945.
2. There were persistent reports in the second week of August 1945, that Jawaharlal might visit Britain "in the interest of Indian independence."



## CONGRESS AND ELECTIONS

## I. The Approach





## 1. Get Rid of the Fear Complex<sup>1</sup>

The war which has just ended led to the postponement of many urgent problems. In some cases this was inevitable as attention had to be concentrated on the prosecution of the war, in many other cases the war was made an excuse for such postponement. The final end of the great World War has suddenly brought all these problems to the forefront and war conditions can no longer be pleaded as an excuse. Both from the national and international points of view the question of India's freedom, political and economic, is now an urgent and vital issue on which depends not only the wellbeing of four hundred millions but also, to a large extent, the future peace of the world. This question, always vital and important, has now been precipitated to the very forefront and there can be no further delay in its solution. The solution has now to be a final and permanent one and not any temporary arrangement for a transitional period. Such a final settlement can only mean the establishment of a democratic government for a free and independent India cooperating in the international domain with the other free governments of the world. As a part of this final settlement, and for the brief period between now and the assumption of the government of free India under a constitution framed by the constituent assembly, interim governments both in the Centre and the provinces will be necessary in order to deal with the acute distress prevailing in the country and with post-war problems which may intensify it, as well as to arrange the preliminary processes of the constituent assembly. But such interim arrangements can only be possible as a part of the final settlement.

It is common ground that the future of India and the constitution of a free Indian state can only be decided by the people of India through their duly elected representatives. For this purpose a constituent assembly has to be formed and such an assembly will decide on the future relations between India and Great Britain, and will also nominate representatives to confer with representatives of Britain in regard to the many problems between the two countries which require consideration and settlement.

It has been stated on behalf of the British Government that a constituent assembly should be summoned at the conclusion of hostilities.

1. This statement of Maulana Azad dated Gulmarg, 17 August 1945, was drafted by Jawaharlal and released to the press on 20 August 1945 from Srinagar. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Hostilities have now ceased. The only excuse that may be advanced for a possible delay in convening the constituent assembly is the lack of a solution of the communal problem. This should offer no difficulty as the Indian National Congress has gone a long way to find a solution. Even if, unhappily, a full solution satisfactory to all the main groups concerned is not reached previously, the constituent assembly, representing these main groups, will itself be in a favourable position to tackle and solve this problem with mutual consent. That assembly will meet in a new atmosphere and with the power and ability to decide without interference from outside and this will no doubt result in a mutually satisfactory settlement.

In regard to the Hindu-Muslim problem, as it has taken shape today with the demand on the part of the Muslim League for a partition of the country, the Congress has given the most earnest consideration to it, desiring as it does the wellbeing and freedom of the country as a whole and of each group or community in it. It has even recognised the right of self-determination of any area provided that this is the established and declared will of the inhabitants of that area, but subject to the exercise of such right not resulting in the compulsion of any other group or community, which is equally entitled to self-determination. The Congress is convinced that the free Indian state can only be based on the willing cooperation of its federating units and of its principal communities and cannot be founded on compulsion. Further the Congress has declared that the federating units should have the largest conceivable amount of freedom as they wish, subject only to certain essential bonds for their common welfare. Even independent countries adjoining each other have to develop these common bonds and links and can no longer live in isolation. Thus the Congress has gone to the farthest limit in recognising the right of self-determination even to the extent of separation under certain circumstances and with certain safeguards for the communities affected and for the country as a whole. It has done so in the earnest hope and belief that when the problems are viewed in proper perspective and without passion and prejudice, the facts of the situation will induce all concerned to cooperate together in building up a free and democratic Indian state, with every freedom to the constituent units to develop according to their needs and wishes. But if any such unit decides otherwise, it can take charge of its own destiny. It will be open to the representatives of such a unit in the constituent assembly to advance its claims and a decision on this should not rest on the majority vote of the assembly but on mutual consent and on the vote of the representatives in the assembly of the areas concerned.



While the Congress position is clear, doubts and suspicions have not wholly disappeared, and I feel that in order to remove these, some clarification is needed. I propose therefore to place this matter before the next meeting of the Working Committee, and if necessary before the A.I.C.C., and I am confident that the desired clarification will be forthcoming.

So far as I am concerned, after long and careful deliberation I have come to the conclusion that the division of India is wholly impracticable and opposed to the ultimate interests of Indian Muslims themselves. In the modern context of the world, with the vast and terrible potentialities of the new atomic bomb, all of us have to think in new terms and to discard many old and cherished notions. In this modern world it is not a division of a country that one can think of, but of ever larger federations of nations. Or else there is no freedom or independence or progress or self-defence. The world is changing before our eyes with something very different from what it was, and if we are to stand on our feet and march to our goal we can only do so effectively as a strong and united nation.

But though I am convinced of this, I realise also that the present political atmosphere of the country is surcharged with suspicion and doubt and a large section among Indian Muslims does not seem to be in a mood to view realities in their proper perspective. This section can be expected to do so only when it is assured that the determination of their destinies rests with Muslims themselves without external compulsions. When this is realised the suspicion and doubt will largely disappear and efforts to reach a desirable and mutually satisfactory solution of the communal problem will be fruitful. Such an assurance has in effect been given by the Congress and I am confident that it will be clarified and implemented in the future.

In the great tasks before us, all of us must get rid of the fear complex. I appeal therefore to my fellow Muslims to view the question in this perspective realising that their future lies in their own hands and there can be no compulsion on them. I appeal also to my Hindu and Sikh and other fellow citizens to appreciate this approach to a problem which has troubled us so much and has been a bar to our progress. With this approach on the part of Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs and others, I have no doubt that the atmosphere of distrust will undergo a change and give place to a climate of mutual trust. Even that section of Indian Muslims who are full of doubts today, will give up their suspicion when they realise that no decision will be imposed upon them and they will examine the problem dispassionately as Indians. Thus this approach, instead of encouraging fissiparous tendencies, will,

by removing the very cause of distrust, also put an end to the desire for separation, and will thus promote that real unity on which alone a free India can be based.

## 2. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Murree  
22 August 1945

Your letters, cables reached me irregularly and very late owing my absence in mountains. Am returning Allahabad soon. Shall write fully from there. No intention of visiting England unless some very special occasion demands it. Changing situation<sup>2</sup> demands my presence here.

Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. It was announced on 21 August 1945 that general elections to the Central and provincial legislatures would be held at the earliest possible date and that the Viceroy was going to London for consultation with the British Government on the procedure for reaching a constitutional settlement

## 3. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Lahore  
August 27, 1945

My dear Bapu,

I enclose a copy of a letter<sup>2</sup> received from Krishna Menon which may interest you. I wanted to send it to Vallabhbhai but I am not sure where he is. Perhaps you could share it with him.

I have been involved in Frontier and Punjab matters for some days and have hardly had time to glance through a newspaper for a considerable time. So I am much out of date. May I suggest to you to

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. This contained a design of an improved charkha which would give more output.

write a line to Badshah Khan asking him to attend the next meeting of the A.I.C.C. Maulana is, I believe, inviting him.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

#### 4. To Partap Singh Kairon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
September 1, 1945

Dear Sardar Partap Singh,<sup>2</sup>

I began writing to you three days ago in Delhi but the pressure of work was such that I was unable to finish the letter. This weighed on my mind as I had promised to write to you and was myself anxious to do so. But circumstances made me powerless in the matter. I have sent you a telegram from here and now I follow up with this belated letter.

I must thank you and Maulana Mohamed Yasin<sup>3</sup> for all the trouble both of you took in connection with my visit to Lahore. I know well how much organisation behind the scenes is required to fit in a large number of engagements — meetings and interviews with a variety of people — within a short and fixed period.

The object of my visit to Lahore was, apart from meeting colleagues, principally to help in organizing the Punjab Congress on a strong basis after the long period of three years of enforced inactivity. Whether that visit did any marked good or not in this respect I do not yet know, but it seems obvious that the visit created a good deal of enthusiasm for the Congress cause. This very favourable atmosphere should certainly help in building up the Congress on a widespread and enduring foundation. As I have often stated, the human material in the Punjab is excellent. Our job is to utilize it to the best advantage for Indian freedom.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. (1901-1965); started political career in the Ghaddar Party; joined the Congress in 1929; participated in freedom movement; Secretary, 1939-46 and President, 1950-52 of Punjab Provincial Congress Committee; Minister, 1947-49 and 1952-56 and Chief Minister in 1956-64 of Punjab.

3. At this time President, Punjab Congress Workers' Conference.



My visit did not bear immediate results in regard to the formation of a strong, representative, and generally approved provincial executive. But I trust that it has made all people concerned to think along these lines and that such an executive will take shape soon. Naturally the burden of forming this executive falls on the P.C.C. but, technicalities apart, it depends on the choice of the principal Congressmen in the province. My function was solely to make suggestions and to report to the Congress President.

I am quite convinced that the general sentiment of the mass of the population is strongly pro-Congress. But advantage can only be taken of it if the principal representatives of the Congress in the province present a united front. If the public thinks that the Congressmen are split up into different parties, quarrelling among themselves, then inevitably their enthusiasm for the Congress will wane. This is important at any time but doubly so now when we have to face a critical situation requiring all our united strength.

As I said repeatedly in Lahore, I think that the old executive of the P.C.C. should resign and a new one should take its place immediately. The legal way to do this is for the full P.C.C. to meet and elect this new executive committee. But it is important that the matter be not left to chance and the sway of party feelings. Before the election suitable representative names should be agreed to, so that this list may be accepted by the P.C.C. almost unanimously or by a large majority. The point is that Congressmen in general, as well as the public, should feel that there is unity in the provincial Congress ranks and the best workers have been chosen. The work we have to do is so vast that every possible worker has an important place in it, whether he is in the Committee or not. Our whole attitude must be to invite all good workers, whatever their party affiliations, to join and help. It is a wrong approach to think in terms of keeping out people because we do not happen to like them or their method of working. Of course we have to exclude from our executive all those whose policy has been or is opposed to the declared policy of the Congress. We cannot have anyone in the executive who gives his allegiance to some other organization or group.

I should like to say that I was not favourably impressed by the account I had of the new so-called non-party group that was in process of formation. Essentially this was a party in the strictest sense, and a narrow exclusive party which sought to control the Congress organization. The approach seemed to be wrong in many ways. Instead of doing away with party faction it would tend to increase it. Instead of keeping the doors open to all good workers, new and old, it shut these doors to all who were not approved by the group. In particular it would keep out

vital new elements which are so necessary to the life of a fighting organisation. It would thus tend to petrify the organization and prevent all growth. The Punjab Congress, more than any other provincial Congress, requires expansion and growth, as it has been in the past a somewhat narrow organization without sufficient representation of important elements, especially rural. After the vital experience of the past three years it is all the more important to draw in new vital elements into the Congress.

These new elements should include especially young men and women who have played some part in the past three years. They must have a sufficient number of rural representatives to balance the overweighted city numbers. There must also be an adequate number of Nationalist Muslims and Sikhs who owe their political allegiance to the Congress and not to any sectional organization.

The coming Assembly elections are likely to upset our normal Congress work and may even influence the formation of our executive committee. This must be avoided. It should be made clear that the selection of candidates will not rest with the provincial executive but a provincial board to be formed subsequently after consultation with the central board. I would also suggest that normally members of Congress executives should not stand for election for Assembly, municipality or district board, except by special permission of the P.C.C. executive. This will prevent careerists from trying to enter our executives and would at the same time keep the door open for our capable men.

As regards Communists I have already stated that they should not be taken in any of our executive committees. They will however remain fouranna members till such time as the supreme Congress executive decides otherwise. The reason for their exclusion from the executives is not that they are Communists but that they oppose Congress policy. This should apply to such Akalis also who oppose or have opposed Congress policy during the past three years.

Any arrangement made now will necessarily be temporary. As soon as Congress elections take place, new executive committees will be normally elected.

For the future I should like to suggest certain rules :—

1. No person to be president of any Congress committee for two years consecutively.
2. No person to be secretary of any Congress committee for more than two years at a time.
3. At every election of an executive committee, (provincial, district, city or village), a certain proportion should be new members. This proportion may be one-third or one-fourth.



4. There should be a convention for adequate representation in our executives of Muslims and Sikhs. So also for the depressed classes or Harijans.

In regard to the Sikhs I think it is right and fair that every encouragement should be given to those among them who are wholeheartedly for the Congress and are not affiliated to any other organization politically.

The Punjab Congress should enter into no pacts or agreements with any party or group outside the Congress without the express approval of the All India Congress.

These are some suggestions. I have many more in my mind but this letter is already too long. Your work at present lies in forming rapidly a good and representative provincial executive, and then to reorganize the district committees on a similar basis, including good workers, old or new, regardless of party. Also to start enrolling primary members on an extensive scale in preparation for the Congress elections. You should aim at a very high membership. Constructive work has of course always to be done. I should not bother just at this stage with the coming Assembly elections. There is time enough for them if you can build up the Congress organization on a strong basis.

I am sending copies of this letter to Maulana Azad and to Maulana Yasin.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 5. To Mohamed Yasin<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
September 1, 1945

Dear Maulana Yasin,

I sent you a telegram yesterday which I hope you have received. I am sorry I was totally unable to write to Sardar Partap Singh from Delhi. I am now enclosing a copy of a letter I have sent him. I hope that it will still be possible to come to a satisfactory agreement about the Punjab executive. I would urge you and your colleagues to avoid any public controversy on this issue. This will do harm.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.



I must thank you again for all the courtesy and cooperation that I received from you during my visit to the Punjab.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

# 6. To Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
September 1, 1945

My dear Maulana,

I sent you a long telegram yesterday about the Punjab. I am now enclosing a copy of a letter which I am sending to Sardar Partap Singh, Secretary of the Punjab P.C.C.

Punjab affairs are fairly complicated as you know and there is a great deal that I could write about, but this will take a little time and I am afraid it might miss you in Srinagar. I might mention, however, that there is still some hope of some satisfactory solution being found there, for the present at least. I felt that the new group founded under Dr. Gopichand's leadership was acting in a rather narrow way. I tried to impress upon them not to do so.

The coming Assembly elections are naturally casting their shadow over Congress work. In order to avoid this as far as possible I have suggested that election work should be separated, and should be put in charge of an election board to be appointed later in consultation with the all India board. This may make it easier to constitute a proper provincial executive.

One of the immediate issues is going to be the election to the Central Assembly, especially for the Sikh seat. As this election will precede others, some importance is attached to it. The question is whether a straightforward Congress Sikh candidate should be chosen, or whether someone who, though standing on the Congress ticket, has some affiliation with the Akalis. My own view favours the former course. It is probable that Master Tara Singh himself might stand for election. I think he should be opposed. As to who should oppose him it will be for your Central Parliamentary Board to consider. There is a strong

1 J.N.-Correspondence, N.A.M.I.

element among the Sikhs who are wholly for the Congress and who are opposed to Akali politics. Among these specially are Sardar Amar Singh Jhabbal and his brother Sardar Sarmukh Singh Jhabbal. Both of these brothers have long impressed me by their sincerity, but unfortunately the Akali group in the Congress executive does not approve of them. I shall speak about this to you more when we meet.

I am rather confused about the dates for the Working Committee meetings. If the meeting is on the 12th I shall try to reach Bombay on the 11th and then go to Poona.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 7. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
September 3, 1945

My dear Krishna,

I have sent you 2 or 3 letters<sup>2</sup> since my release and a number of cables. And now I am back home and I have to keep my promise to write to you fully. And yet there is so much to say that I do not know where to begin and where to end. I am overwhelmed with work. It is no easy matter to pick up old threads after a gap of three years, and then so many new things happen and accumulate and demand attention. The mind requires adjustment to new environments. My popularity with all kinds of people, which seems to have grown, has become a burden which I find difficult to carry. It is pleasant and exhilarating of course and deeply moving, but it means a continuous strain and prevents work. Travelling by train or car means sleepless nights and very tiring days. Demands for me come from every direction and the sense of nervous strain increases. I am glad I went to Kashmir. That has done me good. But the moment I returned from the mountains enormous crowds besieged me — such crowds as I had seldom seen in the past.

Meanwhile, huge piles of letters and telegrams await attention. The political situation grows more difficult. Elections loom ahead. I am

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Not available.

spending a week at home after three years and then I go to Poona and Bombay for the Working Committee and A.I.C.C. meetings. I cannot even trace all your letters and cables. They have all got mixed up with other papers. So this letter of mine is not going to be a very satisfactory one.

In one of your letters you mentioned that Stafford Cripps was rather hurt at my not acknowledging his cable of greeting. You were right in telling him that I had received so many hundreds of cables and telegrams that it became impossible to acknowledge them. So I fled to Kashmir. I am now sending him a brief reply<sup>3</sup> by air letter.

There is one thing I want you to know. I have not yet got over Stafford Cripps' behaviour just after his visit to Delhi in 1942. Even during the negotiations he behaved oddly and I was surprised. As soon as the negotiations broke down he made various statements in Delhi, Karachi and later in London which were full of attacks on the Congress. Some of the so-called facts he stated were absolute distortions and there were some complete inventions. Probably he was not personally responsible for all this and spoke from the Government of India's brief. But when these statements were categorically denied by various responsible persons — including me — he might have had the decency to withdraw what he had said. Instead of this, he repeated his previous statements, which meant of course that either he or I was a liar. I suppose he does not realise this for it is the way with Englishmen to look down upon us from their superior perch. All the time Cripps was in Delhi he sat on this perch — a member of the War Cabinet dealing with troublesome people. All this was doubly unfortunate because much was expected of Cripps. I think the person who was most responsible for what happened in Delhi in 1942 was Churchill, but I must say that Cripps proved that he was not capable of handling a difficult situation satisfactorily. He came with fixed ideas, fixed formulae and a closed mind. I thought as long ago as 1939-40 when he came to India, that he had developed these fixed ideas especially in regard to the communal situation. I do not doubt his sincerity and I have always stood for him whenever he has been criticised in India. But something more than self-righteousness is necessary to understand and deal with a difficult problem. For various reasons Cripps' visit in 1942 and all that happened then created a greater gulf between India and England than the action or inaction of any other individual in recent years. So much was expected from him.

3. Not available.



I cannot tell you adequately how the last three years have sunk deep into the mind and heart of India. The barbarities and inhumanities that have been perpetrated here are fresh in people's minds and colour their whole outlook. They are full of them. And then the colossal corruption and nepotism that are rampant everywhere, from the very top to the lowest strata of officialdom. Under the present system there are no checks to them. The contrast between this bribery and corruption and the huge incomes of various officials as well as black marketeers on the one hand and the misery, starvation and nakedness of the great mass of the population is terrible to see.

My visit abroad: As I have told you there is no chance of my going to England or the U.S. The situation here is such that I cannot leave India except for a very special reason. I do not see any such reason anywhere. I am just not going to England to have pleasant talks with pleasant people. If at any time I have to go abroad I shall of course send you the earliest intimation of it.

My books: As I have written to you, I have written a book in prison which I have called *The Discovery of India*, meaning thereby its discovery by me. I shall send you a typescript as soon as this is ready. I have been so busy that I have been unable to attend to this matter. I intend to have an Indian edition published here as soon as possible as foreign editions will take more time. I am having this done in Calcutta as Kitabistan have not behaved decently in our past transactions. I shall also send a copy of the typescript to Walsh for an American edition. This sending by post means delay because of the censors.

I have not written much (apart from the book mentioned above) during the past five years or more. You must keep in mind that I have spent exactly four years of these five in prison. So there is nothing to collect. I wrote an article<sup>4</sup> for *Fortune* (U.S.A.) in March 1942, which was sent by cable, for which they paid me the handsome sum of \$1000. (This created quite a stir in C.I.D. circles in India. After our arrest they examined all our bank accounts and finding a credit entry for \$1000.00 thought it meant one hundred thousand dollars. Obviously, they concluded, this must have come from some secret source for undesirable purposes.) I could send you this article and possibly some pieces but my papers are all mixed up and it is not easy to find them.

You can decide as you think best about the reprinting of any of my books.

As for the royalty money with you, you can keep it for the present. You might, however, let me know how much it is.

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 168-177.

Elections: As I have told you in my cable, the voters' registers are just a mass of errors and omissions.<sup>5</sup> Many are full of bogus entries. Congress people, spending their time in prison, seldom think of these registers till the eve of the elections. Muslim Leaguers and others of their kind have full leisure for this business and are more interested in it than in anything else. We are told that no changes can be made in the registers now.

Then there is the question of civil liberties. Most of the detenus are out though many still remain in prison. There are, however, a large number of convicted persons in prison — sentenced by special tribunals during 1943 and 1944. These tribunals functioned rapidly and summarily after the fashion of military tribunals. Within ten minutes they would sentence a person to ten years or more. Many fantastic sentences have been given, going up to 50 or 60 years. I know of two boys aged 14 years or so who have been sentenced to 45 years each. The treatment in prison has been and is still very bad. Quite a considerable number of persons have succumbed to this and died in prison, especially people from the Kumaun Hills, unaccustomed to the heat, who have been kept in the plains throughout the hottest part of the year. They have slowly faded away and died.

In many places there are still restrictions on meetings as well as other restrictions. The whole executive administration is of course hostile to the Congress. Many of the minor as well as major officials have a very black record and they have no intention of facilitating any change unless they are compelled by circumstances. Their favourite device is to frighten their superiors by saying that if something or other happened there would be rioting. I have no doubt that riots will be organised to signal any change not to their liking. I have also no doubt that there will be no riots if it is made clear that the officials in charge will be dismissed in case of rioting.

The position is unclear and it is obvious that Wavell and Pethick-Lawrence<sup>6</sup> etc. do not know what to do. Cripps clings to his old plan and to his old ideas. That is not the way to go ahead. The rank and file of Labour in England undoubtedly mean well but what they can

5. The electoral rolls prepared in 1936 and revised hastily in 1942, had not been brought up-to-date. The franchise to the Central Assembly extended only to 3 per cent of the people and that to the provincial Assemblies was 13 per cent. So there were in 1945 only 30 million voters as against a possible adult suffrage of 120 million.

6. (1871-1961); Liberal before the First World War; joined Labour Party, 1922; Labour MP, 1923-31, 1935-45; Secretary of State for India and Burma, 1945-7; Member of the Cabinet Mission to India, 1946.

do in the matter is doubtful. It was rather surprising and significant to notice how the great victory of Labour was welcomed in the bazars in India. There was a sense of jubilation, chiefly due, no doubt, to the defeat of Churchill and his party.

You can arrange to send me as many periodicals as you like. Also *The Times* air mail edition if this is possible.

About the *National Herald* I shall write to you later.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

## 8. Cable to Pulin Seal<sup>1</sup>

9-9-1945

Your cable<sup>2</sup> to Gandhiji. British friends always welcome here. But delegation hardly opportune now. It is for British Government to state clearly policy regarding Indian independence and not merely make vague statements or encourage goodwill mission.<sup>3</sup>

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Pulin B. Seal, Chairman of the Committee of Indian Congressmen in England, stated in his cable that British parliamentary circles viewed seriously the decision to hasten with elections in India despite protests about incomplete electoral rolls and proposed that a non-official parliamentary delegation should visit India.
3. Pulin Seal replied that his idea was not a goodwill mission, but personal efforts for mutual understanding of the situation. To this Jawaharlal again cabled: "British friends coming on their own initiative for mutual understanding are always welcome."

## 9. The Struggle of 1942 and After<sup>1</sup>

This resolution deals with the period that has just gone by. It is inevitable that we should cast our eyes at the years that are past. These

1. Speech while moving the resolution on the August movement at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, 22 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 September and *The Hindu*, 24 September 1945.



three years, as the Congress President remarked yesterday, constituted an age, which has witnessed deep and fundamental changes.

Three years ago the Congress resolved to do its utmost to arrive at a settlement with the British Government through the method of conciliation — if such a method would lead us to the freedom of India. But we were all arrested before we could do anything. The A.I.C.C. is a responsible organisation and as such it was bound to give the people a clear lead. We should have anticipated all the moves of the enemy, all the responsibilities that might possibly fall on us, all the false allegations that will be made against us, and we should have prepared our plans. But we were wholly denied the opportunity to take any such step or give any such lead.

The result was that all of a sudden, unheralded and unannounced, a great revolution burst upon India. There was a wave of strikes and hartals all over the country answered by widespread repression, arrests, shootings and bombings. Leaderless and without guidance from the quarters to which they were used to look for help, the people took the initiative into their own hands. They built up their strength and their capacity for organised action. The result was that they met the wave of repression with great courage and determination. The masses took in some places the reins of power in their own hands. It was a mighty and gigantic revolution and it would be futile to seek to examine and pronounce judgment on every small act, every flaw or every mistake committed in those days.

I really do not know how I would have myself reacted if I had been out of jail in those trying days. It would be difficult for me to say what I might or might not have done. How then can I sit in judgment on the people who have followed the dictates of their conscience. And, on the whole, what was done was nothing to be ashamed of. Men and women, peasants and workers took charge of the conduct of affairs with firm determination, and often disregarding the danger to their own lives, faced the might of the British power. It would have been a matter of shame if they had not acted as they did.

It is the duty of the leaders to direct the enthusiasm of the people into proper channels. Elections are not the things that ultimately matter. It is the strength and determination of the people to win freedom that matters and it is the duty of the leaders of the people to direct the enthusiasm and spirit of the people in the right channel.

What is the lesson of this period? The first and foremost lesson is that the people of India are awake. They are now conscious of their rights. Our efforts to teach them and educate them in their own rights have not been in vain. The Congress has played no small part in this

awakening of the people. The Congress is in no small measure responsible for that flash of valour, that determined courage which the people have shown in defence of their own rights. Such valour and spirit of resistance have not been seen in India since 1857. Never before have the people met such a powerful assault as had been made on them. During this whole period no meetings of any kind could be held. The press was gagged and the vast and ugly shadow of the Defence of India Rules lay on the land. Collective fines<sup>2</sup> were imposed on peaceful villages. In many cases the amounts actually collected were much bigger than the levy and the part, which was in excess, went into the pockets of officers.

While I was in jail, the newspapers brought me a picture of the people of India — a picture of a people weak, oppressed, cowed down and frightened, a people running away in terror and unable to stand up to suffering. Since my release I have gone up and down the country and found this to be a totally false picture. I find the people free and smiling, resolute and fearless.

The Government has done its worst to cow down the people. For a few months it did seem as if it had succeeded in creating the impression that the people had been beaten. But it soon became clear that it was far from the truth. I have found among the people a spirit, a flash, a consciousness of power, although that power is not properly organised or canalised and put to effective use. The people of India are alert, conscious, ready to strike a blow once again for their freedom.

Some people have called the Second World War a people's war. Where is the people's war and for what? I do not want to sit in judgment over those who hold this opinion. But to those who know the minds of the millions of India's masses — of the working of the mind of the workers and peasants of India — it is clear that there is only one war and that is the struggle that the people had waged against the repressive measures of the Government. The real people's war is the struggle of 1942.

A few years ago it was a favourite charge against the Congress that the Congress leadership beat a retreat whenever a revolutionary situation arose. A picture was presented of a revolutionary mass pushing forward to freedom, while a pusillanimous leadership tried to pull them back by the legs. Who was it that did the pulling back now? The Congress has committed many mistakes, but we have done nothing which would bring dishonour to the fair name of India. We have done

2. Collective fines (with exemption for Muslims) had been levied, where there was destruction to public property, and the collections, within a few months of the August movement, had amounted to Rs. 20 lakhs.



nothing which would in any way limit or diminish the power of the people.

How could you talk of internationalism until your own country finds a place in the free map of the world? I do not know of any nation which subordinates its own interest to international considerations. Even Russia, a socialist state, has its vision limited primarily by its own interests. Under such circumstances can this slave nation keep its national interest hidden behind a screen, forget its own freedom movement and talk of internationalism?

## 10. The New Proposals<sup>1</sup>

The All India Congress Committee has carefully studied Lord Wavell's and the British Prime Minister's broadcasts on the steps proposed to be taken by British authority in India.<sup>2</sup> These proposals repeat, with minor variations, the offer made in March 1942 by Sir Stafford Cripps on behalf of the British Government, an offer which was rejected by the Congress and by almost every group and party in India. To repeat that offer now is an affront to the Indian people, whose declared opinions have thus been completely ignored. Neither the end of the war, nor the change of Government in Great Britain appears to have resulted in any real change in British policy towards India, which seems to be based on delaying every advance and in attempting to postpone the solution of every problem. The proposals now made are, in the opinion of the A.I.C.C., incomplete, inadequate and unsatisfactory. It is significant that there is no mention in them of the independence of India, and nothing short of independence can be acceptable to the Congress.

The announcement that general elections will be held for the Central and Provincial Assemblies has been made in a manner and in circumstances which arouse suspicion. The sudden dissolution of the legislatures in some provinces has emphasized the hostility of the present

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, 22 September 1945. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.I.
2. In his broadcast on 19 September 1945, Wavell said that he was authorized to find out whether Cripps' self-government proposal was acceptable or whether an alternative scheme was preferred and to create an Executive Council with the support of the main Indian political parties immediately following the elections. Attlee in a broadcast amplified Wavell's statement and reaffirmed the Labour Government's pledge on self-government.



governmental authorities to even the possibility of popular governments in the meantime, and is totally indefensible. The Central Assembly is still governed by the Act of 1919 and is, for all practical purposes, an advisory body, whose advice and recommendations are frequently rejected or overridden by the Governor-General. To continue such an ineffective and important Central legislature, and that too on a franchise limited to less than one per cent of the population, is a mockery of all claims to democracy. In spite of assurances, the electoral rolls for the Central and Provincial Assemblies are not being properly revised.

It has become notorious that the present Government in India is responsible for the widespread corruption that prevails in the country, for the gross mismanagement of the food and cloth problems, and for the supreme tragedy of the Bengal famine. Yet it is declared that, pending elections, and for many months at least, this incompetent, corrupt and most extravagant administration, which enjoys no confidence, save that of its foreign masters, shall continue its misrule and maladministration. The proposals of the British Government, wholly unsatisfactory as they are, become, in this context, significant indications of their desire to hold on to power in India as long as they possibly can and with all the means and methods at their disposal.

Nevertheless, in order to demonstrate the will of the people, and on the issue of the immediate transfer of power, the A.I.C.C. resolves that the forthcoming elections be contested, and directs the Working Committee to take all necessary steps in this behalf. The Committee is confident not only that the people will respond to the call of the Congress on this vital and urgent issue, but will also, with the added strength and assurance that the past years have given them, carry the struggle for the independence of India to a successful issue in the near future.

## 11. Direct Approach to Muslim Masses<sup>1</sup>

It would be useful to view this resolution<sup>2</sup> in its correct perspective. It starts with the broadcast speech of the Viceroy. This speech does not

1. Reply to the debate on the election policy resolution at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, 23 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 September, *The Hindustan Times*, 24 September and *The Hindu*, 25 September 1945.

2. See preceding item. The resolution was moved by Vallabhbhai Patel.

constitute a plan of any kind. It is just an indication of the way the mind of the Government is working. Some people have hoped that with the conclusion of the war and with the Labour Party in power the progress of India towards freedom will become easy. It is true that some of the backbenchers in Labour ranks take a keen interest in Indian affairs and are sympathetic to our aspirations.<sup>3</sup> But, by and large, there has been no change in the Government's policy.

There have been no two opinions in the country regarding the nature of the war which has just concluded. It was certainly not a people's war for Indians, yet the Communists went about calling it a people's war and misleading the public.

Considering the present state of affairs, the Congress is in no mood to get back to office in the provinces. Yet the assemblies are being dissolved in indecent haste in certain provinces, because of the fear that the Congress might come back to office. This is another straw in the wind. From what has been said on behalf of the British Government and even more from what remains unsaid, there is clear ground to be suspicious of British intentions. Yet it is necessary to occupy every position of vantage and exploit every loophole for furthering the cause of freedom.

The Congress Working Committee will frame an election manifesto in which task the points<sup>4</sup> raised during the debate on the resolution will be kept in mind by the Committee. I hope the All India Congress Committee will have an opportunity of approving this manifesto.

I do not think we should bind ourselves to definite promises in the manifesto as the British Government's proposals, on which the elections are to be held, are vague<sup>5</sup> and ambiguous and consequently we cannot be sure what we shall do after the elections.

A wise commander does not anticipate the possible moves of the enemy and does not think of a plan of campaign at the very outset. His first concern would be to build up his army and keep it in fighting trim. In the same way, for the present, we should capture all the seats.

3. On 6 September 1945, Reginald Sorensen and 50 other Labour members of Parliament called for the release of political prisoners and restoration of civil liberties in India.
4. It was suggested that the purpose of the Congress in contesting the elections should be clarified and the Congress should fight the elections on the issue of a constituent assembly.
5. The statements of both Attlee and Wavell made no mention of independence. They contained the usual phrases like "self-government" and "dominion status" with "free and equal partnership". They offered no solution of the communal problem or extension of the franchise or the immediate return of the provincial Congress ministries to office.



It will not be good to disclose all our plans. I am not doubtful of success at the polls; but sometimes when I look at the vast pulsating life in the country I get frightened. This is because I fear that our energies might be frittered away in petty provincial and other conflicts. The Congress should utilise its strength in the right direction, and I am sure that the country will respond to the Congress wholeheartedly.

I do not think that it will be advisable to include anything specifically about the problem of minorities or the Indian States in this resolution. The amendments<sup>6</sup> moved by Dr. Ashraf and Mian Iftikharuddin seem logical. India can become a great nation only when all its people decide to work together for its welfare. It is quite desirable that there should be unity between the various communities and sections of the population, although complete unanimity is neither practicable nor possible. But the moment we leave the high plane of this logic and come to consider the operative part of the amendments, the position will change. As applied to practical realities, the amendments will not work.

I entirely agree that this principle of self-determination is correct. India will not be free until the people stand together. It is only with the cooperation of every section that we shall be able to free India. If any section has decided to follow a different line of action, nobody can prevent it from doing so. But in this context it is necessary to define the implications of the concept of self-determination. Self-determination has played a dominant role in Europe during the war years. But many nations of Europe now think in terms of defence—security and self-defence—rather than of self-determination. The situation must be made clear. What free India will do, only free India knows. None can prophesy at the moment. All that we can say and do say is to state clearly that we will not coerce any unit to go against its wishes. Such coercion, I think, is neither possible nor desirable.

It is unfortunate that some friends consider these issues through coloured glasses. When a tornado is blowing over the land they want to sit down and reckon the mistakes that the Congress has committed. The Congress has undoubtedly committed thousands of mistakes, and it is possible that it will commit thousands more, but the Congress has never been guilty of not trying to reach each and every section of the people. What intrigues me is the fact that these friends never find a single mistake in the Muslim League. Their arguments constitute a

6. Ashraf and Iftikharuddin had proposed amendments designed to give Muslims representing the Muslim majority provinces in the future constituent assembly the right to determine their own future. They had also complained that the Congress message had not reached the Muslim masses.



complete topsyturvydom. It is as if they were looking at the world from the wrong end of the telescope. They argue that the League is the representative body of the Muslims as the Congress is that of the Hindus and therefore the Congress must make terms with the League. I do not accept their premise and, even if I do, the conclusion I would arrive at is not the same.

I think that it is right and proper that the Congress should keep as far away from the Muslim League as possible. I have many contacts with the Muslims. I know the Muslim masses as well as anybody else. I intend very shortly to tour the Muslim districts of the United Provinces and I would challenge the sponsors of the amendments to come with me to the rural areas of my province. I can show them what the Muslim masses feel. It is one thing to suggest that we must win over the Muslim masses and that we should serve them and lead them to freedom. It is a quite another thing to ask us to make up with the Muslim League.

We have done our best to come to an understanding with the Muslim League in the past. We have now come to the conclusion that it is in the best interests of the country to keep away from the League leaders hereafter. Have Dr. Ashraf and Mian Iftikharuddin forgotten the way our President was humiliated by the League leaders?<sup>7</sup> Until and unless they make amends for this, we are not prepared to have any discussions or negotiations with the League. As far as I can see, it is better to be miles and miles away from the Muslim League. Again and again we went to it with folded hands only to receive kicks. Why do people who advocate Congress-League unity forget the words used by Mr. Jinnah against our revered President? Those who have put obstacles in the way of the country's freedom, those who have made us gulp many a bitter cup, with them we can have no truck. The time has therefore come to declare that there would be no more approaches to the League. We shall take the Muslim masses into our confidence. The Congress will be prepared to go to the peasants, the workers, the poor and the oppressed of the land—be they Hindus or Muslims. It will make their cause its own; it will serve them. We shall do everything to satisfy their demands and win them over completely to the Congress. We shall reassure them that every legitimate grievance will be redressed by appropriate means. But as for going to

7. On 1 August 1945, the Muslim Conference in Kashmir, which was a branch of the Muslim League, tried to break up a river procession in honour of Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal in Srinagar. On 11 August the students of Aligarh University harassed Maulana Azad at Aligarh railway station when he was travelling back from Simla to Calcutta.

the Muslim League, never. This is a challenge. We shall face the Muslim League and fight it. One thing only we shall never forget and that is the goal of freedom; with that goal steadily in our mind we shall march.

## 12. The Nation's Party<sup>1</sup>

**Question:** Will the Congress convert itself into a party with the slogan "Ein Fuhrer"?<sup>2</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress is the nation's party and I warn against the idea of a single party or a single leader. Such ideas, no doubt, flourish in the countries where only one totalitarian party is ruling the whole country. I agree that Mahatma Gandhi, whose guidance the Congress seeks, exercises a dominant influence in the Congress, but it is not the type of dominating influence of the leaders of the totalitarian parties in pre-war Germany or Italy. The Congress is not a party but a movement for freedom in which there are people of different views. So the Congress must be a well-disciplined organisation which can enforce its discipline while implementing its decisions.

The Congress is not a political party like the Conservative or Labour Party in Great Britain and hence its election manifesto will be different from those of the Conservative or Labour Party. The Congress election manifesto will outline what the people should do.

**Q:** Is the Congress representative of the whole of India?

JN: Yes and no. Thus, for example, if there come about a lakh of people to the meeting tonight at Shivaji Park, there will be about 40,000 Congress members in the gathering. Besides there will be some sympathisers. But you should not doubt that the Congress stands for the country. It embodies the nation's will for freedom and is open to all who believe in its freedom and independence. The Congress represents its

1. Discussion with Congress workers, Bombay, 24 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Times of India*, 25 September, *The Hindustan Times*, 26 September 1945 and confidential police report to Maharashtra Government, File No. 3590/11/VI-6 (Police Commissioner's office records).
2. One Leader.



members and has the support of millions in this country, who look to it for guidance. While the communal bodies are thinking in terms of communities, the Congress considers every question as affecting the whole nation and not in terms of a particular community or section of the people. The Congress, being an organisation leading the nation to fight for freedom against British imperialism, has to tolerate differences of opinion within its ranks.

Q: Should the Congress allow organised parties to function within it?

JN: You cannot stop formation of parties inside the Congress. If you try to prevent such alignments, there will be groups. Formation of groups or parties prevents honest individuals from functioning properly. Look at me. I am respected not only in India but also abroad. But if I put any good proposal before the Allahabad Congress it will be rejected just because I do not belong to any group. Persons with a common political ideology may come together and form a group or party within the Congress, but all such groups or parties should follow the common line of action, as laid down by the Congress. If any such organised party within the Congress violates the Congress policy, then that party will have no place in the organisation. The Communist Party or the Congress Socialist Party represents a particular viewpoint and is an ideologically different party from the Congress. But organised parties within the Congress will ultimately become dangerous to the Congress when they oppose the Congress policy on the wider issue, namely, the freedom of the country. We are a democratic body and anyone, even Europeans, can become a member of our organisation. Of course, you can stop members becoming office-bearers. They become four-anna members as individuals and not as members of the Communist Party or any other party.

Q: What is your opinion about the Hindustan Mazdoor Sangh?<sup>3</sup>

JN: I have read its rules and they appear to be good. We should cooperate with the Sangh. But this does not mean that we should start rival unions or break the old unions. Nor does it mean that we should

3. In 1938, the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh was formed by the Congress to build the trade union movement on Gandhian lines. The Sangh became active with the release of Congress leaders in June 1945, who found it difficult to cooperate with the All India Trade Union Congress which was dominated by the Communists who were critical of Congress policy.



stop working through the All India Trade Union Congress. That would be very wrong. The Congress should work through all the existing unions. It should become a party of worker-leaders and not a body forming rival unions.

Q: Should there be secrecy in the Congress?

JN: Certain things e.g., the proceedings of the Working Committee, will have to remain secret. But secrecy leads to demoralisation of the masses. We will lose much of the confidence of the people if we adopt secret methods. Hence the Congress should not adopt any secret methods.

Q: Which is to be the Congress volunteer organisation in Bombay?<sup>4</sup>

JN: Until now the Rashtra Seva Dal in Bombay is working as an independent organisation, but under the direction of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee. It is not necessary that organisations in other provinces should be under their P.C.C.s. We shall have to function according to the situation in various provinces. Once such organisations start in all the provinces, we shall have to coordinate them under an all-India organisation. Thus within two to four years we should be able to form a corps of about four lakhs. These volunteers should not be just decorations for use whenever leaders visit a province, but should be real leaders of the people in their villages. Many people have lost much when they were in jail. But now no one looks after them. They are wandering. In a short time they will be demoralised. They should be trained, organised and given positions.

An organisation on an all-India basis to aid the political sufferers should be started, though such a relief committee is functioning in the United Provinces. I want such committees to be started in other provinces also.

Q: Have you any suggestion for organising work among women?

JN: I think that every provincial Congress committee should open a women's department to facilitate women's participation in public life. A beginning should be made in different provinces to set up a central

4. The Maharashtra P.C.C. had proposed to organise a large cadre of full-time workers.

organisation of volunteers' brigade to train volunteers who will be sent to villages to carry on the work of the Congress. A central organisation of such a volunteer brigade on an all-India basis is essential to coordinate the work of various provincial units, although it may not control or exercise executive authority over them. The All India Women's Council is an organisation which follows the Congress, but has grown independently of the Congress.

Q: How can Hindu-Muslim unity be achieved?

JN: This is going to be a very difficult task. Shouting, "unity, unity", is not going to help us. We must realise that the Muslims are in a medieval atmosphere still. Their customs are *Khandani*. Our attitude should be such that they should feel attracted towards us.

Q: What is the position of the Muslim Nationalists?

JN: If the Muslims elect them, then they will be their leaders, otherwise wherever they cannot win the confidence of the Muslims they are individual Congressmen.

### 13. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad

My dear Krishna,

I sent you a cable from Bombay and I am sending a longer cable from here. But it is difficult to say everything in cables and the Congress has got into the habit of passing terribly long resolutions. Besides I am so pressed for time and so full of work and engagements that my mind is continually in a state of flux. I must find some way out of this for otherwise I shall not be able to do any thinking or constructive work. Lack of sleep — not through insomnia but for want of sufficient time — is another upsetting factor. I have just come back from Bombay.

It is no good my giving you long texts of resolutions passed. I am having them sent separately. But the background was one of extreme irritation at various happenings in India and England and suspicion of the British Government. It was this background even more than the content of the new Wavell proposals that influenced people. Wavell's

1. This undated letter was obviously written at about this time. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.



and Attlee's broadcasts were also rather irritating. Then there was a certain vagueness about these, which may be an advantage in certain circumstances but viewed in the present context, this made matters worse. Back of all this was the intense feeling which the past three years have roused. I do not think there is enough understanding of this at the other end. It must be remembered, however, that the Indian people have changed and hardened considerably during the past three years or more.

There was no rejection of the Wavell proposal as such because the time to accept or reject had not yet come. For the moment we go into the elections and much will depend on their result.

Apart from this general Congress reaction, there are also of course all manner of inner conflicts and trends within the Congress. I cannot go into that. You can guess some at least, but probably you cannot easily understand all of them. These inner conflicts will not break out in the open for we have learnt to carry on in spite of difficulties. But they do confuse and weaken.

Then there is an extraordinarily strong pro-Congress sentiment all over the country. We shall leave out the Muslims for the time being. The city and rural masses have never been so enthusiastic about the Congress. I have hardly ever seen such vast crowds everywhere as I see now. This sentiment has spread to non-Congress people also (again I am not considering the Muslims as a whole) who look up to the Congress for leadership. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Ambedkarites do not count for much in the long run. The Muslim League of course counts.

It is difficult to prophesy about Muslim seats in the elections. In the Central Assembly the League is bound to do well with the restricted electorate. Probably the present ratio will continue. In the provincial elections there is a great deal of uncertainty. In Madras, Bombay, and Central Provinces where there are few Muslim seats, the Muslim League will probably do well. Sind is rather doubtful as it is politically very backward and is swayed by personal and semi-feudal considerations. There is a possibility of the League being in a minority. In the U.P. Congress and pro-Congress candidates might win 25 Muslim seats at the most, that means I think over a third. In the Frontier there is likely to be balanced representation. In the Punjab, the League is not likely to win more than 35 seats, that is much less than half. The rest of the Muslim seats will go to the Congress or the Unionist Party, chiefly to the latter. In Bengal the League might do better. In Assam the League will not do well.

This is a rough estimate which may have to be changed later. General non-Muslim seats will of course go in overwhelming numbers to the



Congress. This means that the League cannot in any event form a ministry in the Punjab without having a coalition with some other group, and at present both the major groups, the Congress and the Unionist Party are hostile to it. Probably no single group in the Punjab legislature will have an absolute majority. The Congress is likely to be the largest group. In Bengal also the League cannot have a majority in the legislature but with the help of the European group of 25 it might just have a majority, as it did last year. In Assam no League majority.

The League is getting rather frightened and is adopting its usual tactics of threatening riots etc. Probably you will hear of these riots. They seem to be taken for granted by the police and the authorities, and of course when there is widespread expectation, a riot does occur. Also it is extraordinary how League people in their meetings and papers openly advocate violence against individuals. Maulana Azad is their special target and everything upto murder has been suggested. I come second on the list. In all the League propaganda there is no mention of any policy or programme; there is only abuse of the Congress and of individual Congressmen.

There is no doubt that as a rule city Muslims are for the League, especially the rougher elements. But it is also clear, especially in the U.P. and Bihar, that the Momins (chiefly the weaver class) and the Muslim peasantry are far more for the Congress because they consider the League an upper class organisation of feudal landlords etc. An unknown factor, however, creeps in when God and the Koran are used for election purposes.

The Communists in India appear to have decided to support League candidates. This of course will cut them off completely from the Congress, without giving them any place in the League. This is very unfortunate for them. As it is they are exceedingly unpopular. I am really surprised at their lack of sagacity and vision. The one man among them who has some vision is Dange and he is unfortunately away. Whatever the rights or wrongs of a particular attitude may be, there is obviously something wrong about opposing a widespread mass feeling. It is now no easy matter for the Communists to hold a meeting in the U.P. because of local opposition. They had to abandon their U.P. provincial conference at Jhansi. They have lost their hold on the students and the kisans and are weakening on the labour front. Their strongest centres are Andhra and the Punjab. Curiously enough the Communist Party of India has developed into a middle class (almost upper middle class) organisation with lessening contacts with the masses.

Iftikhar,<sup>2</sup> muddle-headed man that he is, thinks that he can reform the Muslim League from within — a foolish idea, but he is foolish enough to do anything. The League is so terribly poor in competent men that apart from Jinnah there is hardly any one who counts. The League ministries in Bengal and Sind and in the Frontier (before the change) were so terribly corrupt that they were the talk of the bazars as well as of the drawing rooms. Abdul Qayyum<sup>3</sup> is a very different sort of man from Iftikhar — Iftikhar is honest and straight though lacking in intelligence. Qayyum has long been known to be a careerist. He is not even a Frontier man, and is, I am sorry to say, a Kashmiri.

I do not know if all this helps you to form a picture of politics etc., here at present. But this will at least make you realise how difficult it is for me to leave India in this turmoil. It is not my habit to run away from a difficult situation. Just now, quite apart from the elections, there is almost a passionate demand for me everywhere, especially in the places which have suffered most during the past three years or more. I must visit these places and I propose to begin soon. I must go to Bengal. Then there is the National Planning Committee which is reviving, and the trial of the I.N.A. men in Delhi. These officers and men are the pick of the Indian army, a splendid lot, and it is worth remembering that not only is there widespread interest in them and in their fate among all classes of Indian civilians, but their old comrades of the Indian army are also intensely interested.

About your proposal to send a delegation, I consulted Gandhiji and cabled to you his reaction. I agree with that. We would welcome the deputation or mission and help it in every way in India. But it would be wrong tactics to ask publicly for money from India. That would make the deputation ineffective. You can if you like get some help directly from private sources in India. But in the main you will have to rely on money collected in England. You will not have to spend much in India. If you like you can draw upon such of my monies as you may have. I would like the deputation to come; more especially I would like you to come for it is necessary for you to have personal contacts here and view the situation at close quarters. It is ages since I saw you and

2. He resigned as president of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee on 24 August 1945 because his advocacy for Congress-League unity was not acceptable to two other party colleagues.
3. Abdul Qayyum Khan (b. 1901); Congress member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1937-42; Deputy leader of the Central Legislature, 1942-45; joined Muslim League, 1945; Chief Minister, N.W.F.P., 1947-53; President, Pakistan Muslim League, 1958, 1970; was in Z.A. Bhutto's Ministry, 1971-77.



I would love to have nice long talks. Lalji Mehrotra<sup>4</sup> passed through Allahabad today and showed me your letter to him.

Two or three weeks ago Pulin Seal cabled to Gandhiji about a proposed delegation (including Catlin).<sup>5</sup> He consulted me. As you know I am not enamoured of Seal and I did not encourage him. Finally Gandhiji asked me to tell him that if any Britishers wanted to come on their own initiative they could do so and would be welcome.

You have written to me about our having a small commission to go into the question of the constituent assembly. I placed your proposal before our colleagues. They felt that it was premature. They are much too busy with the elections and with Congress organisations.

I suppose there is much else that you have asked me about. But this letter is too long already.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

4. (b. 1901); Secretary, Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, 1922; President, Indian Merchants Association, Karachi, 1939-42; after independence served for some time as ambassador in various countries.

5. Prof. George Catlin, an active member of the India League in London.

#### 14. To Mohammed Yunus<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
1-10-1945

My dear Yunus,

I have your letter. My visit to the Frontier has obviously borne some fruit. Witness the letters you have received from Dr. Khan Sahib and others. For the rest of course it is for you and other people there to make good. I shall of course always do what I can. Maulana Azad wanted to visit the Frontier from the Punjab but now that he is ill, I do not quite know what will happen.

We seem to be moving rapidly towards various big changes in India. What this will be I cannot say now. But the coming elections will no doubt influence them greatly. For this reason these elections have assumed an unusual importance. The Central Assembly elections are really not very important but coming before the other they might influence the other elections slightly, especially in the Frontier where

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.



Abdul Qayyum's defection and challenge have to be met. Obviously it is not enough for us to condemn him. We have to defeat him and his nominees. So I hope that every effort will be made to this end.

You will of course be very welcome if you care to join me in any of my touring. So far I have made no arrangements for this, though I am continually visiting odd places. This is really not connected with the elections. I am just going to Lucknow for Provincial Congress Committee meetings. After that I shall visit some of our own districts which have suffered most during the last three years, for instance, Ballia, Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh and Benares. Soon after I shall go to Jaipur reaching there on the 20th October for three days. On my way I shall spend a day at Delhi in connection with I.N.A. matters. In this way I shall be moving about and returning to Allahabad every few days. On the 6th of November I have to be in Bombay for National Planning Committee. You have to decide for yourself where you can be most useful — in the Frontier or elsewhere. Whenever you like to come here you will be welcome.

I am glad that both you and Taj are keeping well.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

## 15. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
October 3, 1945

My dear Krishna,

I have received your long cable of warning against various organizations and more especially the Pan African Federation. About the same time I received a cable from Manchester from a number of persons claiming to represent this organisation. In the latter cable nothing is said to which any of us here can object. Among these I know Padmore<sup>2</sup>

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. George Padmore, active member of the International Africa Service Bureau, founded in 1937.

slightly; I do not know the others. It is not our practice to associate ourselves formally or otherwise with any organisation abroad. But when friendly messages are received they are acknowledged in a friendly manner without any commitment. Even in India I receive thousands of messages from individuals or groups unknown to me. Invariably an attempt is made to send a friendly reply although this involves a risk of the name being exploited for wrong ends. The risk is greater in foreign countries. But I just do not see how we can be discourteous in order to avoid that risk. Besides, the A.I.C.C. office functions as it chooses in reply to such communications and I cannot constitute myself as a censor.

I do not know the inner troubles between various groups in England, though sometimes I can guess them. Nor is it desirable for us to take sides definitely unless there is some special reason for it. I want to be careful but I am pointing to you the difficulties in our way.

I am sending you by ocean mail a part of the mss of my new book. More will follow. As I have already written to you, the book is being printed in Calcutta and ought to be out in January. The address of the publishers is: The Signet Press, 10-2 Elgin Road, Calcutta. This is a new press which does good work. I am fed up with Kitabistan.

There is a persistent demand for my old books here — *Autobiography*, *Glimpses*, *Unity of India*. You told me, I think, that the first two are being reprinted. Some publishers here are anxious to bring out the *Unity of India* under arrangement with Lindsay Drummond. I am referring them to him. I have no objection.

There is a young Indian Christian, Cyril Modak, who was brought up in strictly missionary surroundings but subsequently drifted to the Congress, though he is not very political in his activities. He has been writing a number of small books. I have only seen one or two of these rather hurriedly and cannot give any final opinion. But on the whole I think he is capable of doing good work. He is earnest and enthusiastic. He is very anxious to get a book of his published in England. I told him I could do nothing in the matter and anyway publishers are a tough lot. But I suggested his writing to you and sending you his books.

Yours,  
Jawahar

## 16. To Ghanshyam Singh Gupta<sup>1</sup>

Lucknow

5.10.45

Dear Ghanshyam Singhji,<sup>2</sup>

I have received yesterday your letter of the 24th September from Bombay.

I read about the ban on the *Satyartha Prakash* in Sind when I was in Ahmadnagar Fort prison. I was shocked and surprised that any government should impose this ban, more especially under the Defence of India Act and Rules. What this had to do with the Defence of India Act or with the war was a mystery which I was unable to solve. On the face of it this was a misuse of the Defence of India Rules. But the ban really raised larger issues of civil liberty and religious freedom, and as a firm believer in civil liberties I was inevitably opposed to it. To believe in or practise civil liberties does not mean that we accept and tolerate what we like and approve of, but that we tolerate what we do not like or approve of. We have to defend even the right of our opponent to criticise us, for otherwise our own right giving expression to our views may be attacked and suppressed.

So the question for me is not one of the merits or demerits of the *Satyartha Prakash* but the more fundamental one of not interfering with freedom of writing and expression. I am no authority on the *Satyartha Prakash*. I must say, however, that its polemical way of approach to religious and other problems does not appeal to me. But my views on this subject have little importance; what has far greater importance is my view on civil liberties. According to this latter view the ban on the *Satyartha Prakash* was wrong and unjustified. What is worse is that this may become a precedent for future invasions of civil rights and liberties.

I am convinced that the future government of free India must be secular, in the sense that Government will not associate itself directly with any religious faith, but will give freedom to all religions to function. This religious freedom presupposes the tolerance of other religions by the votaries of each religion. Any other approach is not only wrong in itself but will inevitably lead to friction and trouble. Any government in India which infringes this rule of religious freedom takes

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. (1885-1976); Arya Samajist; member, A.I.C.C., 1919-36; Speaker, C.P. Legislative Assembly, 1937, 1946; at this time president of the All India Satyartha Prakash Defence Committee.



upon itself a grave responsibility and sets a bad example for others. This I think correctly represents the Congress attitude in this matter.

As for what the Arya Samaj or others should do in regard to this ban it is not for me to say. I do not see eye to eye with the Arya Samaj in some matters though I have admired its social and educational work. In this particular matter I agree, as I have stated above, that the ban on the *Satyartha Prakash* is unjustified. I am, however, quite clear in my mind that at present any action in the nature of satyagraha would be wrong and might lead to undesirable consequences. I would therefore suggest, if I may, that no such direct action be undertaken. We are living in rapidly changing times and we must ever bear in mind the larger interests of the country, which ultimately include the interests of the various groups in the country. A wrong step now might well injure their interests and the very cause you are advocating now. On my part, I need not assure you that I shall always endeavour to have civil liberties in all forms maintained and protected in India, and to resist any encroachment on them.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 17. The Spontaneous Revolution<sup>1</sup>

The United Provinces Pradesh Congress Committee meeting after more than three years of storm and stress of the World War and of a mass upheaval in India against alien and imperialist domination and its ruthless suppression desires to send its greetings to the people of the province and to extend its homage to all those who have suffered in the cause of India's freedom and independence. The Committee pledges and dedicates itself anew to this great and sacred cause which has inspired our people and for the realisation of which so many of our countrymen have laid down their lives and undergone life-long suffering.<sup>2</sup>

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and his speech made at the U.P. Provincial Committee meeting, Lucknow, 6 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 8 October 1945.

2. The resolution ends.

I am proud to recapitulate the part played by my countrymen in the last three eventful years. The uprising in August 1942 throughout the length and breadth of the country was spontaneous. It was a revolt of an oppressed people.

The strength of the Congress has immensely increased in the last three years. A new era has dawned and we have to move cautiously. The journey to Swaraj is hazardous for many obstacles are still to be negotiated.

It is imperative to have complete unanimity on all matters relating to the elections. We cannot afford to fritter away our energy in minor party squabbles. All ranks must be closed. We must accept the decisions of the Parliamentary Board.

## 18. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad

10 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

As promised in my yesterday's letter, I am sending you a draft manifesto<sup>2</sup> for the Central Assembly elections. This has turned out longer than I intended and it covers considerable ground, although I have avoided detail and the more controversial topics. I felt that it would be desirable to cover this ground for two reasons: 1. The manifesto is bound to attract attention in foreign countries and the avoidance of all other issues, apart from independence, will create a bad impression. People may say, as they have sometimes said in the past, that the Congress represents big business etc. 2. This will contrast well with any manifesto that the Muslim League will issue, for it is certain that they will avoid mentioning any of the country's problems and will harp on Pakistan. Of course, it is quite possible that they will not issue any manifesto at all.

I would suggest that when you issue the manifesto you might say something to the following effect: "In accordance with the directions contained in Resolution VII of the A.I.C.C. held in Bombay the Working Committee is issuing this manifesto for the elections to the Central

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. See the following item.

Legislative Assembly. A more detailed manifesto will be issued later, after approval by the A.I.C.C. at its next meeting, for the provincial elections."<sup>3</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The manifesto for the provincial elections was issued on 11 December 1945.

## 19. Draft Manifesto For Central Assembly Elections<sup>1</sup>

For sixty years the National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this long span of years its history has been the history of the Indian people, straining at the leash that has held them in bondage, ever trying to break the chains of subjection and alien rule. From small beginnings it has progressively grown and spread in this vast country, carrying the message of freedom to the masses of our people in the towns as well as the remotest villages. From these masses it has gained power and strength and developed into a mighty organisation, the living and vibrant symbol of India's will to freedom and independence. From generation to generation it has dedicated itself to this sacred cause, and in its name and under its banner, innumerable countrymen and countrywomen of ours have laid down their lives and undergone lifelong<sup>2</sup> suffering, in order to redeem the pledge they had taken. By service and sacrifice, it has enshrined itself in the hearts of our people; by its refusal to submit to any dishonour to our nation, it has built up a powerful movement of resistance to foreign imperialist<sup>3</sup> rule.

The career of the Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and of unceasing struggle to gain freedom. In this struggle it has faced numerous crises and come repeatedly into direct conflict with the armed might of a great Empire. Following peaceful methods, it has not only survived these conflicts, but has gained

1. 10 October 1945. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. The differences between this draft and the final version which was printed in the newspapers on 27 October 1945 have been given as footnotes. The changes were made by Mahatma Gandhi.

2. "lifelong", omitted.

3. "imperialist", omitted.



new strength from them. After the recent three years of an unprecedented mass upheaval and its cruel and ruthless suppression, involving terrible suffering for our people,<sup>4</sup> the Congress has risen again stronger than ever and more loved by the people by whom it has stood through storm and stress.

The Congress has stood for the independence of India and for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups in India and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for the right of the Indian people as a whole to have full opportunities for growth and self-development according to their own wishes and the genius of the nation; it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework. For those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice, it has stood for the removal of all barriers to equality, and special help from the State and society in order to raise them from their backward and depressed state.<sup>5</sup>

The Congress has envisaged a free, democratic State with the fundamental rights and civil liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the Constitution. This Constitution, in its view, should be a federal one with a great deal of autonomy for its constituent units, and its legislative organs elected under<sup>6</sup> adult franchise. In regard to the franchise, as other matters, sex should be no bar and women should take a full part as citizens in national activities.<sup>7</sup>

A hundred and fifty years and more of foreign rule have arrested the growth of the country and produced numerous vital problems that demand immediate solution. Intensive exploitation of the country and the people during this period has reduced the masses to the depths of misery, starvation and beggary.<sup>8</sup> The country has not only been politically kept

4. "involving terrible suffering for our people", omitted.

5. This later read: The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for full opportunities for the people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius; it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework; and for this purpose, such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis. It has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal of all barriers to equality.

6. "universal," inserted.

7. This sentence omitted.

8. 'and beggary', omitted.

under subjection and humiliated, but has also suffered economic, social, cultural and spiritual degradation. During the years of war, and even now, this process of exploitation by irresponsible authority and complete ignoring of Indian interests and views has reached a new height of incompetence in the administration, leading to terrible famine and widespread misery among our people. There is no way to solve these urgent problems except through freedom and independence. But the content of political freedom must be economic and social freedom also.<sup>9</sup>

The most vital and urgent of India's problems is how to remove the curse of poverty and raise the standards of the masses. It is to the well-being and progress of these masses that the Congress has directed its special attention and its constructive activities. It is by their well-being and advancement that it has judged every proposal and every change, and it has declared that anything that comes in the way of the good of the masses of our country must be removed. Industry and agriculture, the social services and public utilities must be encouraged, modernised and rapidly extended in order to add to the wealth of the country and give it the capacity for self-growth, without dependence on others. But all this must be done with the primary object and paramount duty of benefiting the masses of our people and raising their economic, cultural and spiritual level, removing unemployment, and adding to the dignity of the individual. For this purpose, it will be necessary to plan and coordinate social advance in all its many fields, to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of individuals and groups, to prevent vested interests inimical to society from growing, and to have social control of the mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and<sup>10</sup> distribution, as well as of banking and exchange. Cooperation should be encouraged in land, industry and other departments of national activity so that free India may develop into a cooperative commonwealth.

In international affairs the Congress stands for the establishment of a world federation of free nations. Till such time as such a federation takes shape, India must develop friendly relations with all nations and particularly with her neighbours on the east and the west and the north. In the Far East, in South East Asia and in Western Asia, India has had trade and cultural relations for thousands of years, and it is inevitable that with freedom she should renew and develop these relations.

9. This sentence read: "The content of political freedom must be both economic and social".

10. From here this sentence read: "distribution in land, industry and in other departments of national activity so that free India may develop into a cooperative commonwealth."



Reasons of security and future trends of trade also demand these closer contacts with these regions. India, which has conducted her own struggle for freedom on a nonviolent basis, will always throw her weight on the side of world peace and cooperation. She will also champion the freedom of all other subject nations and peoples, for only on the basis of this freedom and the elimination of imperialism everywhere can world peace be established.

On the 8th of August 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution, since then famous in India's history, and in this resolution it gave the battle-cry 'Quit India'. By that demand and challenge, the Congress stands today,<sup>11</sup> and it has reaffirmed the national and international objectives of that August resolution. It is on the basis of this resolution and with this battle-cry that the Congress faces the elections for the Central and Provincial Assemblies.

The Central Legislative Assembly is a body with no power or authority and is practically an advisory body whose advice has been constantly flouted and ignored. It is completely out of date and is based on a very restricted franchise. The electoral registers for it are full of errors and omissions, and no opportunities for correcting or adding to them have been given. Large numbers of our countrymen are still in prison and many others who have been released are disqualified from standing for election. Obstructions in the way of holding public meetings still continue in many places. Yet, with all these and other handicaps and drawbacks, the Congress has decided to contest the elections<sup>12</sup> to it on the issue of independence and 'Quit India'. In this election petty issues do not count, nor do individuals, nor sectarian cries — only one thing counts: the freedom and independence of our motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people.<sup>13</sup>

So the Congress appeals to the voters for the Central Assembly all over the country to support the Congress candidates in every way at the forthcoming elections, and to stand by the Congress at this critical juncture, which is so pregnant with future possibilities. Many a time the people of India have taken the pledge of independence; that pledge has yet to be redeemed, and the well-beloved cause for which it stands and which has summoned us so often, still beckons to us. But the time is coming when we shall redeem it in full, not by the election but by what

11. The rest of this sentence from here was omitted.

12. From here up to reference number 13 the following was the final version: to show that the inevitable results of elections, however restricted, must be to demonstrate the overwhelming solidarity of the opinion of the voters on the issue of Independence. Therefore, in this election, petty issues do not count, nor do individuals, nor sectarian cries.



comes after it. Meanwhile, this election is a small test for us, a preparation for the greater things to come. Let all those who care and long for freedom and the independence of India meet this test with strength and confidence, and march together to the free India of our dreams.

## 20. To Cyril Modak<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
11.10.45

Dear Modak,

I have read through parts of your book<sup>2</sup>—I could not manage to read it all. It has indeed been an effort to find the time to read even this much. I give below a note written after my reading.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### Note

The last five years have been fateful in the history of the world and of India, and their deep impress lies in every mind and heart. Who can tell their story effectively and make the printed page a picture of the long agony of these years, with their moments of exaltation and noble endeavour and splendid courage, and then long hours of sorrow and doubt and frustration, and civilization with all its brilliant achievements intent on its own destruction, through some inner decay or lack of moral foundations? Perhaps in some age yet to come a future historian will draw that picture and wonder at the folly of this generation. And yet he will miss that experience which has given an unforgettable reality to these years. But we who have been the actors or onlookers and carry that experience on our deep-lined faces and our hardened hearts, how can we tell this story which has been the warp and woof of our individual lives, how can we lay bare the innermost recesses of our being?

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. *India's Answer to the West*. The book expounds the basic Indian attitude to almost everything of importance in the modern struggle for existence and clarifies what India stands for and strives after.

Yet some have dared to do so. It is of these years in India that Cyril Modak has written. I do not agree with much that he has written, but he has a vivid and arresting style and the subject is worthy of high tragedy. His book is interesting and brings out something of the deep anguish of these years and the problems that pursued us, and of surging masses of people and their cruel suppression. And so those who read this book will learn something of these years, and feel a little of what others have felt so much.

**21. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
11.10.45

My dear Krishna,

This is a hasty note. I have your letter of Sept. 24th. I am glad you wrote to me though there is nothing very new in what you have written. I know Seal well enough. In a way I have already answered your letter last week. I can understand your position. I want you to understand the position here. Many people do not like my ways or opinions and deliberately want to checkmate me. Sarat Bose has just needlessly tried to pick a quarrel with me. I cannot impose my opinions on others and I do not wish to do so. Anyway I shall keep what you say in mind. I am just off on a tour.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

**22. To Jogendra Singh<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
16.10.1945

Dear Sardar Jogendra Singh,<sup>2</sup>

I have received your letter<sup>3</sup> of the 10th October. I do not know to which particular report you refer, and in what context it appeared in the papers. What I have said is that there is a lot of talk of war criminals in Europe and men of the Indian National Army are going to be tried. But a real list of war criminals should include men in the highest places in New Delhi. Further I have said that seldom, if ever, has there been so much bribery and corruption in India as during the past few years and today; that this is amazingly widespread and extends from the highest officials to the lowest and even some members of the Executive Council have not kept themselves untainted; that in any event the highest administrative and executive organs must bear the responsibility for this utter degradation of the administration. I have referred in particular to the Bengal famine and to the profits out of death made there.

There was no reference to you nor indeed were you meant in any way, except in the sense that the whole Executive Council must bear responsibility. Nor did I refer to the Indian Members of the Council.

I must say that I feel very strongly about the moral deterioration of the whole administrative system in India, which has naturally affected numerous departments of public activity. There is a great deal of talk of black markets. I do not think these could have spread out in the way they have done if the rot had not set in in the administration.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. N.B. Khare Papers, National Archives of India.

2. (b. 1877); Minister of Punjab, 1926-37; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1942-46.

3. In his letter dated 10 October 1945, Jogendra Singh asked Jawaharlal either to prove or withdraw his charge that the Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council were corrupt.



23. To E.G. Suchling<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
16.10.45

Dear Mr. Suchling,<sup>2</sup>

I received your letter of the 5th Oct. yesterday on my return to Allahabad.<sup>3</sup> I have read it with interest. A reasonable consideration of the points you have raised is hardly possible within the limits of a letter and you will appreciate that I am a fairly busy man — Also there is a feeling of tiredness at having to explain the Indian viewpoint to Englishmen who start with certain premises and cannot get rid of them or see the others' point of view. Perhaps that is the major difficulty in dealings between India and England. You refer to tricks of the trade, 'self-interest', power politics and 'insincerity'. You will not expect me to deal with such accusations and charges. And yet it does seem a little odd that an intelligent Englishman should think in this way, whatever he may think of the rightness and wrongness of our actions. A very large number of Indians have, from the English point of view, probably wasted their time in ineffective activity. That is not usually associated with self-interest or power politics or insincerity. It is obvious that there is a vast gulf between the Indian and English approaches and not even an English socialist has any conception of the passion that moves the Indian people. Your letter interests me as a significant example of the smugness and self-complacency of the average English liberal or socialist who calmly tells me and others like me that we are unpatriotic. That in itself should be proof of the fact that the Englishman's rule in India is finished, whatever good or evil it might have achieved in the past.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. An English army officer who had been in India for four years from 1942.
3. He wrote: "Your predominant emotion after so many years of jail life must be one of bitterest frustration; but is this not due to a certain extent to a national failure — a certain rigidity that has prevented the discovery of appropriate forms of struggle? India seems to have learnt much less in 200 years than Nazi-occupied Europe learnt in four. Mahatma is pretty responsible for this: he is a saint, not a politician; and his continued supervision of the Congress does India no good."

24. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
30.10.45

My dear Krishna,

Your air mail letter No. 12 of 20th Oct. about the long-term prisoners. I am asking Feroze Gandhi to communicate with you. He has been in charge of political sufferers' relief work in the U.P. the last 18 months and knows all about it. But his information will relate to the U.P. only. As for other provinces I am asking Kripalani to help. You had better keep in touch with Feroze directly. His address — Anand Bhawan.

Regarding the points dealt with in Henderson's letter<sup>2</sup> I am referring them to Vallabhbhai Patel who is in charge of all our election work.

I returned to Allahabad yesterday after an exhausting tour in Rajputana. I am off to Delhi on the 1st for the I.N.A. trial and from there I go by air to Bombay on the 7th Nov. for National Planning Committee meetings. Probably I shall be there for a week.

I have received a brief note from Stafford Cripps to which I am replying also briefly. It is just a friendly personal letter in answer to mine acknowledging his cable on my release. I wish there was some psychological understanding of the Indian problem. I can see little of this. Meanwhile, the gulf grows wider and deeper and the situation here develops at great speed. The next year is going to be a difficult year, full of crises. There is a complete absence of grasp, an impotence in the British Govt.'s dealings with India.

Separately I am sending you (by air) a press cutting containing the Congress election manifesto for the Central Assembly elections. It is proposed to have another and more detailed manifesto for the provincial elections.

Yours,  
Jawahar

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Arthur Henderson, Under Secretary of State for India, in his letter of 16 October 1945 to Krishna Menon, promised to deal with complaints of refusal of voting facilities to Indian army-men and to relax the rule of disqualifications owing to imprisonment.

**25. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
31 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am writing to you about a matter which distresses me somewhat, although there is not much that you can do about it. Everywhere that I go, I see tremendous enthusiasm for the Congress and at the same time some kind of a hiatus between the local Congress group in control and the general public. In many places these old committees, which are still functioning, are out of touch with most of the people who functioned during the last three or four years. The recent rules asking them to coopt members to fill vacancies have, curiously enough, worsened the situation. The people coopted have often been specially chosen to strengthen the old group. There are cases of persons being coopted who indirectly opposed the movement or apologised or indulged in black markets and the like. The result is great dissatisfaction with the ruling group.

I am speaking from personal knowledge of my own province which in many ways is better organised than several other provinces. I imagine conditions are much worse in some other provinces.

In the Punjab I am very dissatisfied with recent developments. I know a large number of enthusiastic young people who are simply not allowed to work. For my part I have no time and no inclination to enter into local squabbles.

I have been receiving many telegrams of protest against the nomination of candidates for election from various provinces. No doubt you have received far more and are in a better position to judge. I cannot, however, help feeling disturbed at some of the choices made or proposed in the Punjab, in Bengal and in Sind. I earnestly trust that people who have played us false in the past will not be encouraged now.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 66.



26. To Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
October 31, 1945

My dear Maulana,

I am receiving demands from all over the country for election tours. I do not know what to do and where to go. I should like to go to the Frontier Province and to Bengal specially. Of course my own province has a prior claim on me. I have so far not even visited great cities such as Benares, Cawnpore, Agra and Meerut, or many of the afflicted areas. Much of my time is being taken up by the I.N.A. work and the National Planning Committee.

There is a matter which distresses me. I find, almost everywhere that I go, small cliques controlling Congress committees and preventing enthusiastic workers from coming in or doing any work. There is a very big gulf between these committees and the public. The public is enthusiastic for the Congress, but often the committees are not popular. They are stale and old and often consist of people who have never worked.

From such reports as I get the situation in the Punjab is very unsatisfactory and the same old groups which have done so little in the past are again in control and new people are kept out.

Also reports in the papers of some nominations for the elections are surprising, specially from the Punjab, Sind and Bengal. I know that you are in a better position to judge and I should not interfere in any way. I do not propose to interfere but I wanted to tell you how distressed I was about all this. If I go on an election tour it becomes very difficult for me to say anything in support of a candidate who seems to be undesirable. Questions are put to me and I do not know how to answer them, because my own previous statements are put before me.

I received your telegram last night about Rafi being in charge of the U.P. and Delhi. I do not quite know what this means but Rafi is on his way to Calcutta and you will no doubt explain it to him.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**27. Wavell's Record of his Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>**

I had an hour's conversation with Nehru. I spoke to him on the lines of P.S.V.'s brief, emphasizing that the present attitude of himself and other leaders was likely to make a settlement extremely difficult; that no Government could continue to tolerate indefinitely incitement to violence or threats to its officials; and that the future of India must depend on some compromise between Hindu and Muslim.

He replied to the last point first; and said that Congress could make no terms whatever with the Muslim League under its present leadership and policy, that it was a reactionary body with entirely unacceptable ideas, with which there could be no settlement. He said it was Hitlerian in its leadership and policy, and tried to bully everyone. He made the somewhat surprising claim that the general relationship between Hindu and Muslim was better than it has been for a long time and that the two communities had discovered that mob violence did not pay. I mentioned the Bombay riots, and he claimed that they had proved his point since they did not spread to the rest of Bombay. I suggested that a casualty list of 40 killed and many injured was some evidence of communal trouble, but he tried to claim it as merely the work of a few hooligans. Later on, when I argued that there must be some agreement between the main communities if we were to have a political settlement, he said that the Congress would never approach the Muslim League again, because of Jinnah's rudeness to their leaders, but if the Muslim League approached them they would be prepared to discuss matters.

On the issue of the victimization of officials, he admitted having named five officials of the Ballia district, and claimed that their actions had justified him in doing so. I pointed out that a general attempt to threaten police and officials was going on in many parts of India, and was creating a deplorable atmosphere. His only answer was to say that if officials behaved as those in Ballia district had done, he could not avoid preaching against them.

He practically admitted that he was preaching violence, and that while he deplored violence, he did not see how violence could be avoided if legitimate aims could not be attained otherwise. I warned him that the preaching of violence must eventually lead to violence, and

1. 3 November 1945. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VI, pp. 439-41.

that such violence would be likely to lead to violent counter-measures. He talked in vague terms of the psychology of the masses, the evils of foreign rule, the general uprising of the people of Asia, and so forth. I left him in no doubt that the Government were bound to take the necessary measures to prevent violence.

Towards the end he indicated, though he did not actually say so, that Congress was likely to refuse to take office in the provinces, except under a Central Government which they controlled or approved. I said that it was the policy, as he knew, of H.M.G. and myself to form a Government at the Centre, but that the present attitude of political leaders was not going to make it easy.

He finished by asking what had been the result of my reference to the Supreme Commander of his request to be allowed to proceed to Java. I told him that the Supreme Commander had agreed with me that such a visit was inadmissible in present conditions, and that I thought a reply to this effect had already been sent him. He then asked what would be the attitude towards a request to visit Burma, for himself or for members of the defence committee of the I.N.A., to collect evidence; I said that this would be a matter for the Government of Burma.

Nehru's attitude was quiet and friendly throughout, and I cannot help liking him. But he seems to me to have reached the state of mind of a fanatic, and is quite incapable of considering any views which do not coincide with his own. I am afraid that his mood is dangerous to peace, and I think he realises this himself and regards a conflict as more or less inevitable. He did not mention the I.N.A., nor did I.

## 28. To Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
November 16, 1945

My dear Maulana,

.... Repeated telegrams from Daud Ghaznavi<sup>2</sup> and others in the Punjab, supported by Vallabhbhai, have made me consent to go to the Punjab for three days. This is specially meant for the Sikh elections. So

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. (Extracts)

2. Maulana Daud Ghaznavi, president, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee.



I am leaving Lucknow tomorrow afternoon for the Punjab. On the 21st I shall spend a few hours in Delhi for the I.N.A. trial and then go on to Meerut. Pantji and Rafi want me to spend three days in the Meerut division specially for Kazmi.<sup>3</sup> All this takes me to the 25th November. I gather that you have agreed to have the Working Committee meeting in Calcutta about the 6th December. I have been feeling for some time that the Working Committee meeting is urgently needed, as many important questions have to be dealt with. The Indian situation is developing very rapidly, perhaps too rapidly, and the temperature of the country is rising. Perhaps the biggest cause of this is the I.N.A. trial. Then there is this Indonesian tragedy which I think requires some more urgent declarations on our part. Of course you can issue a statement about this but in addition it is desirable, I think, for the Working Committee to express itself formally and make some suggestions. I think we should clearly and definitely ask for the recognition of the Indonesian Republic. We should further press for a complete refusal on the part of all those concerned to load or help in any way the sending of war materials to Java. India is supplying a great deal of this. In Bombay Indian seamen have refused to load them. But this is only one instance.

Then there is this election business which requires some frequent consultation by the Parliamentary Board, if not by the Working Committee as a whole. The Parliamentary Board unfortunately hardly meets at all and quick decisions have to be taken. The absence of consultation leads to many misunderstandings.

I hope, therefore, that there will be as early a meeting of the Working Committee as possible.

When I was in Poona I suggested to Vallabhbhai that you might have a meeting of the Parliamentary Board at Bindhachal just before the Working Committee meeting in Calcutta. Indeed I suggested that the Working Committee itself might meet there but probably this will be inconvenient to Gandhiji and some others. For the Parliamentary Board, however, Bindhachal would be suitable. It is on the way to Calcutta for most members and it will be a quiet place. In Calcutta there is bound to be a great deal of rush and hurry and confusion. Vallabhbhai liked the idea and if you agree you could telegraph to him fixing a date for the Parliamentary Board meeting at Bindhachal, say three days before the Working Committee meeting in Calcutta. He will be in Poona till the 19th when he will go to Bombay.

3. Mohamed Ahmed Kazmi, a Nationalist Muslim who was contesting against Liaquat Ali Khan from Meerut.

I was hoping that the A.I.C.C. might meet about the middle of December to pass the election manifesto and for other important work. But this seems a little difficult now.

As I wrote to you I was a little distressed at various happenings, including some Congress nominations for elections. In the Punjab the old guard is still carrying on almost undisturbed and new persons have little chance. In Sind Vazirani<sup>4</sup> has appeared upon the Congress scene. I discussed some of these matters with Vallabhbhai. He told me that the Punjab nominations were brought to him by M. Daud Ghaznavi and Partap Singh, the Secretary, and were strongly supported by them. Gopichand also went then or later. As time was limited and quick decisions had to be taken, the only choice was either to accept the Provincial Board's recommendations or possibly to miss having a nomination in time. About Deshmukh<sup>5</sup> he said that it was essential for a Maharashtrian to be given a place in Bombay as the electorate is mostly Maharashtrian. The Maharashtrians available in Bombay were strictly limited. He tried to get some from Poona to stand but every important person refused as they wanted to go to the Provincial Assembly. Few people desire to go to the Central Assembly as they realise that it will hardly count. Gandhiji apparently was consulted and ultimately he said that in the circumstances Deshmukh should be accepted.

I noticed in Poona that frantic telegrams were being received from many provinces asking for a quick decision even in regard to provincial election, as work was suffering. I hope that when the Parliamentary Board meets soon all these matters will be decided.

You were good enough to issue a statement about the I.N.A. committees as suggested by me. This work has grown so big that the new committees should be appointed, I think more formally, and not left to us three as previously suggested by me. I discussed this matter with Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai also. I suggest, therefore, that you might formally appoint the two following committees:

I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee:

Vallabhbhai Patel

Jawaharlal Nehru

J.B. Kripalani

M. Daud Ghaznavi

Sarat Chandra Bose

Sardar Partap Singh

4. Nihchaldas C. Vazirani, who was a minister in Allah Bux's cabinet, was a Congress candidate for the Sind Assembly elections in 1946.
5. G.V. Deshmukh (1883-1963); a prominent surgeon of Bombay; member of the Central Legislative Assembly, 1945-46.

Raghunandan Saran (treasurer)

Khurshed Naoroji (convener)

with power to add to their number.

As Punjab is chiefly concerned, I have two names — the President and the Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee. Sarat Babu has been taking special interest in the I.N.A. and therefore he might be included. Vallabhbhai has agreed to serve on the committee. If you feel that instead of Daud Ghaznavi some other Punjab Congress Muslim would be better, you can put his name instead.

The funds committee might consist of:

Vallabhbhai Patel

Jawaharlal Nehru

Bhulabhai Desai

Bakshi Sir Tek Chand

Raghunandan Saran (treasurer)

with power to add to their number.

These are of course my suggestions and you will decide as you think right.

You have asked me about the proposal of the editor of *The Statesman* to have someone having the Congress outlook contributing a column. For my part I dislike having anything to do with *The Statesman* or *The Times of India*. I do not want to cooperate with them in any way even by suggesting names. I object strongly to be put on the same position as Shahed<sup>6</sup> who has been writing such poisonous stuff from time to time in *The Statesman*. By our suggesting a name we inevitably help *The Statesman* to appear as an impartial paper, which it is certainly not.

Some years back the editor of *The Statesman* asked me to contribute on foreign affairs weekly. This did not touch domestic politics but I was not prepared to write for *The Statesman*. I think *The Statesman* and *The Times of India* should be made to feel clearly that we resent their attitude to the national movement and are not prepared to deal with them in any way.

I am sending this letter through a messenger from the A.I.C.C. office. I am afraid I shall not be here to receive your reply. I have already given you my programme above. But should you wish to send any

6. A Muslim correspondent who contributed to *The Statesman* fortnightly articles on Indian affairs from the standpoint of the Muslim League.



instructions to the A.I.C.C. office this person can be used for the purpose.

Yours affectionately,  
Allahabad

## 29. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
26 November, 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just returned from a tour of Meerut Division and received your letter<sup>2</sup> of 21 November.

For some time past I have been definitely of the opinion that we should set up a few demobilised officers from the Army as Congress candidates for elections, provided of course we can find suitable men. I mentioned this fact to the Punjab P.C.C. people and asked them to keep a lookout for such persons — Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. I wrote also to Pantji to the same effect. The Punjab of course is a province most concerned, and partly U.P. also is concerned. I know as a fact that any such action on our part will have far-reaching and favourable consequences. Some time back the question arose of setting up Shah Nawaz<sup>3</sup> of the I.N.A. as a Congress candidate. I asked Shah Nawaz as well as Sehgal<sup>4</sup> and Dhillon<sup>5</sup> if they would be willing. All three were willing. Shah Nawaz's name is on the voters' list but I do not know if the other names are there. The I.N.A. people of course stand on a different footing from the regular armymen. I think that both the categories should be considered by us. There is at present a widespread and favourable feeling in the army towards the Congress. Large numbers of these people are going to be demobilised soon and I feel it would be right for

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 2, pp. 76-78.

2. Vallabhbhai Patel had mentioned that some army officers had offered to contest provincial elections.

3. Shah Nawaz Khan (b. 1914); joined Indian Army, 1936; joined Indian National Army and rose to the rank of Major General; GOC, Congress Seva Dal, 1946; Member of Parliament, 1952-67; Minister of State, Government of India, 1971-77.

4. P. K. Sehgal (b. 1914); Captain in Baluch Regiment.

5. G. S. Dhillon (b. 1914); joined as Lieutenant in Indian Army; joined I.N.A. as colonel and served for four years.

them to be given a place in the Congress and in the legislatures on our behalf.

About my Punjab impressions, I imagine that both the Congress Sikh candidates will win, but it is difficult for me to judge from a brief tour. Everywhere I was told that Baldev Singh<sup>6</sup> was using Government officials to bring pressure on voters for the Akali Dal candidates. Indeed, the contest was more against these officials than against the Akali Dal itself. I think the Sikh elections have served a good purpose, whatever the results. It has brought all the progressive Sikh forces together in line with the Congress.

About the Punjab generally, the position seems to me fairly good so far as the public reaction is concerned, but bad so far as the Congress organisation is concerned. The old party spirit is rampant and Congressmen work against each other. Daud Ghaznavi, the president (Punjab P.C.C.), is, I think, a good man and not connected with any party. Dr. Gopichand, while having a strong position among the Hindus, is especially disliked by the non-Hindu groups as well as by the opposite party in the Congress. In the choice of candidates there is a great deal of party feeling involved. For the present the Congress has done very little in the way of big propaganda. They simply cannot function in a big way. They plead lack of funds also. The main contest for the Muslim seats is between the Muslim League and the Unionist Party, both of whom are spending money on a lavish scale. In spite of this I am sure the Congress will do well in the elections provided a strong line is taken, suitable candidates chosen and financed.

I cannot say definitely in regard to the Muslim candidates whether it will be better in the Punjab to set up direct Congress candidates or allow the Muslim Nationalist Board to set them up on its behalf. But my general impression has been, more especially in the U.P., that the direct Congress appeal goes farthest. Especially in the rural areas in the U.P. the Congress is popular amongst the Muslims. They have hardly heard of the Jamiat or the Muslim Board. The contest Kazmi *versus* Liaquat Ali is a close one and on the whole there has been very good work done in it. It is possible that Kazmi might win. If he loses, he will do so by a small number of votes. I was told repeatedly that the Muslim League had got thoroughly frightened there and was distributing money to voters. What effect this will have I do not know.

6. Sardar Baldev Singh (1901-1961); Minister, Government of Punjab, June 1942-Sept. 1946; Member for Defence, Interim Government, 1946; Defence Minister, Government of India, 1947-52.

Whatever the results of these Muslim elections, they have had a very good effect on our workers and on the situation generally. We have discovered that there is a very good response among them to our appeal and we have certainly laid the foundations of a favourable drive for the provincial elections. I do hope that, as you said, we shall contest every Muslim seat.

This election tour has been very exhausting and my throat is on the point of giving way. Indira has been ill here but I only come to Allahabad for a day at a time. I am going to Lucknow tomorrow for a meeting of the executive council of the P.C.C. On 1 December I shall probably be in Delhi. When I was in Delhi last I received a letter from Sir Claude Auchinleck,<sup>7</sup> the Commander-in-Chief. It was a friendly letter saying that he desired to meet me and to have a talk with me. He mentioned various dates. In my reply I said I would be glad to meet him and I chose one of his dates—1 December. Since then I have not heard from him again. But I expect I shall have to go. After that of course I shall go to Calcutta where I hope to reach by 5 December.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

P.S.

I might add that Colonel Loganathan<sup>8</sup> of the I.N.A. (now in Delhi Fort) is keen on standing on the Congress ticket for this provincial election. I do not know whether his name is on the Madras list or not. He is an excellent and highly competent man. I wish you would ask the Madras Congress people to find out about his name and if it is there, to put him up.

I want to repeat that the recent election work has been a revelation to Congress workers so far as the Muslim areas are concerned. It is astonishing how good the response has been. How we have neglected these areas! We must contest every seat.

7. Sir Claude Auchinleck (b. 1884); Deputy Chief of General Staff, Army Headquarters, India, 1936-38; C-in-C in India, 1941 and 1943-47; War Member of Viceroy's Executive Council, 1943-46; Supreme Commander in India and Pakistan, 1947.

8. Lt. Col. A. D. Loganathan, an officer of the Indian medical service, joined the I.N.A. and served as Cabinet Minister and Chief Commissioner of the Provisional Government of Free India in the Andamans; I.N.A. Commander at the surrender of Rangoon.



**30. To Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
November 27, 1945

My dear Maulana,

I have just come back from touring the Meerut division. I feel tired and my throat is bad. But I have to go again immediately to Lucknow for a meeting of the P.C.C. Council. I wanted very much to pay you a visit but I do not see how I can do it. On my return from Lucknow I shall spend a day and half here and then go to Delhi for a day. When I was in Delhi last I received a letter from Sir Claude Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief, saying that he would be glad to meet me and have a talk. He mentioned several dates. In my reply I chose one of these dates — December 1st. So I presume I shall have to go to Delhi for this purpose. I hope to return by the 2nd afternoon.

I understand that you are going by air from Allahabad to Calcutta and that you are likely to come to Allahabad on the 2nd afternoon or evening. If so, I shall of course meet you here. I propose to go to Calcutta on the 4th December.

My brief visit to the Punjab has not produced very favourable impressions on my mind. Probably we shall win the two Sikh seats. But so far everything is vague about the provincial elections. Maulvi Daud Ghaznavi is a good man but the party spirit in the Punjab and the extremely narrow outlook of most people there prevents solid work being done. I have no doubt that the ground is favourable. I hope still that the Punjab Congress will shake itself up and do something.

In the Meerut division and elsewhere I have found an extraordinarily favourable response from the Muslim masses. Whether we win these seats or not on this occasion, I have no doubt in my mind that we can win quite a number of Muslim seats in the provincial elections in the U.P. specially in the rural areas. I was surprised to find how popular the Congress was among Muslim peasantry. In fact the Jamiat did not go far with them, it was the Congress that counted. In the cities, the Jamiat influenced people more. On the whole, however, it was obvious that the Congress counted. It is pretty clear that we have long neglected the Muslim masses. The fault lies with us not with them.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

I hope you will kindly let me know your programme by letter or telegram.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

### 31. To Mohamad Yunus<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
November 30, 1945

My dear Yunus,

Your letter of the 22nd.<sup>2</sup> The Central Assembly elections are over here and we have lost Muslim seats in the Province. We have as a matter of fact done remarkably well considering everything. We took in hand this election only ten days before it took place. The response to us was really remarkable, specially among rural areas. But the electorate was so limited. We have plenty of information to the effect that the Muslim League simply showered money on the voters. I believe they have spent in these five or six elections in the U.P. over five lakhs of rupees. They are very worried about the provincial elections which will take place on a broader franchise. We are going to put up candidates for every seat and I think we shall do well.

Indu has been ill and isolated for the last two weeks. She got mumps and has been quarantined.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. This letter dealt with the election situation in the North West Frontier Province.

### 32. Jai Hind<sup>1</sup>

Three years and three months ago we suspended publication. Not, as normally happens in this country, by imperial decree, but in obedience

1. A signed editorial by Jawaharlal in the *National Herald* when the paper resumed publication on 30 November 1945 after more than three years of closure *National Herald*, 30 November 1945.

to the mandate of the Congress, and because we felt that our honour as Indians and as newspapermen compelled us to refuse to submit to ignoble conditions. Three years have passed and we start afresh, but the memory of these years lies heavily in our minds and we are much older than this brief span of years might indicate.

Three years of war and tumult, and sorrow and death, of hope and despair, of the sudden and spontaneous rising of the common man in India and its brutal suppression. Years of solitude in prison cells, and of thousands driven underground, homeless and disinherited wanderers, keeping the flag of resistance high against tremendous odds. Years also of others of our blood and race, dreaming of India's freedom, adopting, unknown to us, methods different from ours to achieve it. Beyond our frontiers there was the tramp of armed men, and armed women, pledged to the independence of India, and new and stirring cries rent the air.

All this and much more the years have brought us. The World War has ended, appropriately with the atom bomb, not with a whimper but with a bang, and the United Nations glare at each other and, behind a cover of fine phrases, snatch at the seeming spoils of victory. Imperialism, although dying, yet raises its head in India and elsewhere; in Indonesia a gallant people, struggling for freedom, are bombed and shelled by British armies.

Six years ago the Congress Working Committee, apprehensive of the future, stated that "it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation". The war is over and already it is possible to judge how far that apprehension was justified.

With this heavy burden of the past few years we start afresh. What do we stand for? What does the *National Herald* represent? Wherein does it differ from other newspapers? It is difficult to say. There are many newspapers in this country with a long and honourable record and it would be presumptuous for us to compare our young and somewhat wayward selves with these popular and well-established organs of solid respectability. Yet there has been, perhaps, something in the *Herald*, something which has brought us in the past the affection and goodwill of the public. We represent the Congress viewpoint of course, for we believe the Congress to be the voice of the nation and to reflect in its many-sided self the varied urges of the Indian people. In the struggle for India's freedom especially, it has been the flame that has lighted up people's hearts and the shining sword that has cut so many of our shackles. But it would be incorrect to say, as has sometimes been



said, that the *Herald* is an official organ of the Congress, for the Congress has had, and has no such official organs. And, therefore, what the *Herald* may write in no way commits the Congress.

Some people have referred to the *Herald* as representing my personal views. That also is not correct and much has appeared in the *Herald* in the past with which I did not wholly agree. It is true that I have been associated with it and I have valued that association. But the *Herald* is a joint concern and we have tried to work it in a spirit of co-operation and comradeship between directors and editors, leaving the editors freedom to do their work. My direct responsibility is only for the articles that I might myself contribute.

We start afresh and in doing so we have had innumerable difficulties to face, and those difficulties continue, for we cannot obtain the machinery and equipment that we desire, and we have naturally not prospered during these war years. Wartime, whatever misfortune or sorrow it may bring, is usually a time of prosperity for newspapers. But it has not been so for us, for it has been our proud privilege to share in the ups and downs of our people during these years of pain and suffering. It is not with apology that we face our readers, but as comrades-in-arms and equals in the mighty struggle for India's freedom. And as comrades we claim their indulgence for our failings and for the many shortcomings which inevitably accompany the resumption of a newspaper in these abnormal times. We are determined to overcome them and to be worthy of our people and of the cause we represent.

Three years ago Governor Hallett publicly stated about the Congress: "We wish to destroy the organisation and render it impossible for the movement to grow and expand." Sir Maurice Hallett is soon leaving this province and India. What does he think now of that proud declaration, backed as it was with the armed legions of a mighty empire? Who flourishes today? Who will flourish tomorrow in India? Has he known at any time, during his long residence in India, the Congress to be so popular, so powerful, so representative of the people's passion for freedom as it is today? He goes, as others have gone before him, having failed utterly in his endeavour, having, indeed, by the very ruthlessness of his opposition, fed the flames of a nation's resistance to alien rule. Has the lesson been learnt or are there others still who presume to stop or check the onward march of India to independence?

We, on our part, have learnt many a lesson, for life for us has been a hard taskmaster and our people have repeatedly gone through the valley of suffering and the ordeal by fire. If we were determined previously, there is more of steel in us today and a measure of desperation, and a passion that drives us on and allows us no respite, and a feeling

of intolerable anguish that the four hundred millions of India should be the playthings of others who have reduced them to this state of poverty and famine and ignoble subservience.

What of our people? After these black years they are vital again and defiant as they have never been before. Even the memory of recent sorrows fades away in the exuberance of the moment and in the vision of the future that they see unfolding itself. They have to check that exuberance lest it waste their energy and lead them away from the high-way we have to tread. But they have to guard and preserve that vitality, that refusal to submit to the degradation of alien rule, that firm and final resolve to which form was given three years ago in the words 'Quit India'.

We ended our last leading article, which appeared in the *Herald* on August 15, 1942, with the words: *Vande Mataram*. The motherland is dear to us and it is right that we should pay our homage to her. And yet even these words of hallowed memory enshrined in our country's history, are somewhat out of date today. We bow to no one today, for we are soldiers of India, and our little selves are bits of that dear motherland of ours, and her honour is in our keeping. Today our cry is of unity, of freedom, of victory. It is a cry which has resounded and reverberated in the valleys and mountains beyond India; and the old walls of the Red Fort in Delhi have echoed it, and today it is spreading far and wide to our remotest villages. It is our salute and greeting, our challenge and our battle cry, our token of fealty to each other, our pledge to be true to our cause. So to our readers and comrades we say: *Jai Hind!* May it be well with them in the difficult days to come. May it be well with India, and may freedom come to her soon and be equally shared by all her children. *Jai Hind! Jai Hind!*

### 33. Maurice Hallett<sup>1</sup>

The last five or six years in India have been extraordinary years in many ways. There was the war, of course, and continuous conflict and nationalist upheaval and its suppression.

1. On the day Maurice Hallett retired as Governor of the United Provinces, *The Leader* carried the opinions of the provincial leaders on his administration. The above represents Jawaharlal's views. *The Leader*, 6 December 1945.



During these years we have had what might be called the culmination of authoritarian rule by the permanent services in India.

War and other events facilitated this development and we had the curious spectacle of, on the one hand, India being on the verge of freedom, and at the same time having a government which was and is the complete denial of freedom, such as even India has not had for a long time past.

Perhaps a crisis brings these extremes together and all half-way houses are swept away. In this period of undiluted authoritarianism the old members of the Indian Civil Service have not only reverted to their old traditions but improve upon them.

In India certain personalities stand out as emblems of this authoritarianism and Sir Maurice Hallett is one of them. It is not surprising, therefore, that he has become the symbol in Indian eyes of the worst type of British imperialism and colonialism. He declared that everyone who was not with his Government was to be treated as an enemy. He announced his determination to crush and kill the Congress and the nationalist movement. He did his best but, as he himself must realize now, he was up against a rock which could not be shattered. For Indian nationalism and the desire for freedom are too big and powerful to be crushed by anybody. Sir Maurice Hallett thus becomes the symbol of the failure of the British rule in India and of the complete futility of that rule today.

Whatever virtue it might have possessed in the past it has none today. It has outlived itself completely and drags on a precarious existence. It has neither competence nor the ability to understand the Indian mind or Indian problems, much less can it tackle them with success. In the world of today that rule and its exponents are out of date relics of the past that is gone. Whether Sir Maurice Hallett realizes this or not, I do not know; but every intelligent observer must come to this conclusion. We discuss political and economic problems and it is right that we should do so; but behind them all lie many psychological and emotional factors which govern a nation's life and development. These have been ignored by the British or deliberately flouted but it is clear that it is these factors that will have their way. Only then, with a true understanding of India's problems, can there be a successful solution of them.

That solution depends entirely on the elimination of the British rule and that type of government which has been postponed far too long in India. We have to build a new and free India on a different basis, opening out the doors of opportunity to every single human being who lives in India.



### 34. Initiative on India<sup>1</sup>

\*\*\*They started by adopting rather a gloomy and stolid silence, during which I developed my appreciation of the general position. In due course, Nehru joined in — and after that the conversation was very general, although, on their part, Nehru did most of the talking. My principal object was to make it quite clear to them that H.M.G. was determined that India should have independence without delay — and also that they were determined that Congress would gain nothing by resort to force. I believe I made this abundantly clear.

Patel was rather malignantly silent — except with regard to the political prisoners. I explained to him that this was not a properly descriptive word for them, as they were in reality all senior and important members of one or other of terrorist societies — men whose lives were devoted to violence and to organising and inciting others to violence. I explained the liberal policy that I had adopted and said that I saw that no useful purpose would be served in the release of this hard core of 288 terrorists before the elections.

I believe that such talks as I have had lately with Gandhi and the others are to the good. I believe that we do not meet these people enough. They brood and simmer amongst themselves, practically never meeting any British or Muslim League people of any consequence — and their minds build up grievances and imagined things. There is little doubt in my mind that Nehru, at any rate, is suffering (amongst other inhibitions) from an inferiority complex. I could see (or believed I could see) that it does them good to get their imaginings off their chests, even if they only bring denials and ordered discussion. It is a case of liaison again which always tends to breed suspicion and misunderstanding.

I believe, too, that there can be little doubt that such talks will take a great deal of the sting out of recent inciting speeches made by Nehru & Co.<sup>2</sup>

X

X

X

X

1. Two accounts of R.G. Casey's interview with Maulana Azad, Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal at Calcutta on 7 December 1945 are printed.
2. Entry in Casey's Diary (Extract), 7 December 1945. India Office Library and Records, London.

I saw Azad, Patel and Nehru last night. The greater part of talk (which lasted nearly two hours) followed standard lines. Clearly Patel and Nehru are fire-brands of the outfit and are suffering from suppressed frustration, indignation and a rather hysterical impetuosity particularly on Nehru's part. Patel is coldly vindictive. Azad is more detached and theoretical. In course of talk they attributed the breakdown of Simla Conference to advice given to the Viceroy by "the I.C.S. who always bow the knee to Muslim League". They also attributed the "threat" in Secretary of State's recent speech to "the I.C.S." I told them in unmistakable terms that this was wrong and that I myself and every Britisher in India welcomed what they wrongly described as a "threat". I said that I had no doubt that Congress could plunge India into chaos overnight if they wanted to but I said that they would get nothing out of such a frightful action and that it would not intimidate His Majesty's Government but would be coped with with all the many means at our command. I emphasised that just as Secretary of State meant precisely what he said about pursuing the course outlined towards self-government, so also he meant precisely what he said about not tolerating violence — and both these statements had been greatly welcomed by all of us.

As to prospective constituent assembly Nehru said that Congress would only participate if it was a body capable of coming to decisions which would be implemented and not if it were to be a body making "recommendations" to Government of India or His Majesty's Government, some of which might be adopted and some discarded.

They said that release of all political prisoners would be an evidence of goodwill on our part. I said that expression "political prisoners" was rather misleading so far as Bengal was concerned. The small number that we still had in detention were all top leaders of various terrorist organisations, men of violence — and that we had considerable evidence that they had not undergone any change of heart. I said I believed that peace and quiet in Bengal depended largely on this hard core being kept in detention at least until after election.<sup>3</sup>

3. Casey's letter to Wavell, 8 December 1945. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*, Vol. VI, pp. 623-624.

35. To Gopichand Bhargava<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
December 29, 1945

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

I am glad that you are standing on behalf of the Congress for the university seat for the Punjab Assembly. In any event you would have my good wishes as a Congress candidate and otherwise and I would appeal to voters to vote for you. As this election draws near, it becomes ever clearer that vital principles are involved in it and every voter should consider the matter on this high plane. It may be difficult for the average voter to think in these terms and to release himself from his normal likes and dislikes. But a university constituency is another matter and it is expected that the voters from such a constituency will realise their responsibility even more than the average voter in a general constituency. They must realise that in this election, in the final analysis, they have to vote for the freedom and independence of India or for some other vague, narrow or personal objective. In a sense of course all of us talk of independence and grow eloquent about it. But the question is what comes first in our thoughts and actions and what is second and third. If the freedom of India is not the first thing for us, then it becomes a secondary issue. The Congress has stood and stands for India's independence first and foremost and everything else after that. I am not aware of any other organization running the elections or any individual standing on a personal ticket, who puts independence first and is prepared to act on his convictions. Personal tickets of course do not and should not count at this stage at any rate. Therefore the clear issue is for every voter: Does he stand for independence first or not? If he does so, then inevitably he must vote for the Congress candidate. It is for our intellectuals to appreciate this position and react to it, and not to wander aimlessly without anchorage.

I wish you well, therefore, in this election and I hope that the voters for the university constituency will vote for you and give you a thumping majority, thus demonstrating where they stand in the vital issues of today.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.



36. To Ghulam Ali<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 11, 1946

Dear Ghulam Ali,<sup>2</sup>

Sadik Ali has sent me your letter<sup>3</sup> of the 3rd January. I agree with much that you say in your analysis of the present communal situation. It is not a complete analysis but it is more or less true insofar as it goes. As you say, the crux of the question is economic and not religious or cultural. But it is also obviously, as you yourself indicate, psychological.

But all this only explains to some extent the present background of the Muslim and the Hindu mind. It does not offer a solution. It is clear to me that Pakistan does not and cannot protect the Muslims in the economic sphere. It will make their position worse for reasons I need not go into now. To say that the Muslims have lost faith in the good intentions of the Hindus and that the Hindus have shown little or no generosity or equity to the Muslims, does not help much, just as it does not help to say that the Muslims by their political attitude have driven a large number of Hindus almost to desperation. Groups, so long as they exist as separate entities, do not, as groups, think or act in terms of equity or generosity. They are moved by waves of sentiment. One thing leads to another. Every action has an interaction, and it is difficult to trace out the original offender. Communalism leads to communalism, as hatred usually leads to hatred. I think it is a fact that the economic position of the Muslims has deteriorated during the last 20 years. It has partly coincided with the growth of the communal tension. Hindus have undoubtedly misbehaved in this respect, but a growing separatist tendency among the Muslims encourages such misbehaviour. Thus if Muslim businessmen, who are relatively weaker, form a separate Muslim Chamber of Commerce, then inevitably the much stronger non-Muslim groups also function separately and tend to ignore Muslim interests.

Your suggestion that the Congress should decommunalise all communal institutions is good in principle, but in the way you propose it,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A cousin of Sadik Ali, Permanent Secretary of the A.I.C.C.; he was an engineer who took an interest in politics.
3. He wrote that the fear of economic domination by the Hindus had led the Muslims to demand partition. If communal institutions were "decommunalised" by the Congress by adopting a resolution, Hindu-Muslim unity could be promoted.

seems impracticable at the present moment because it would involve not merely the Hindu-Muslim problem, but the whole basis and fabric of life in India. That life was not communal in the new sense of the term, but rather compartmental and occupational. I want those compartments to disappear. But it is beyond my power or that of the Congress to ignore obvious facts of today, most of which do not affect the communal situation. Those facts are changing and we should speed up this change. Nevertheless it is desirable for the Congress to keep away from communal institutions.

I do not think there is much truth in your statement that we have passed pious resolutions regarding Muslims and have not backed them up by action. In the nature of things action cannot be so obvious in this sphere. Even today you will find in many areas, notably the peasantry of the U.P., that the Muslim peasants look up to the Congress because we have served them as peasants. Communalism is far more in evidence among the educated classes of Muslims as well as Hindus although they should have much more in common.

Your proposed resolution does not touch the economic question on which you have rightly laid stress. That must be tackled in a different way. If you read the Congress manifesto recently published, you will see that much has been said on this question. I am sorry I have no time to deal with this at greater length here.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 37. To Frances Gunther<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 12, 1946

My dear F.G.,

On my return to Allahabad yesterday I received your letter of December 27th. I hasten to reply and to give you the information you require.

1. The dates of the provincial elections in India are spread out over three months or more. They have already begun in some provinces like Assam. Sind and the Punjab follow. Then N.W.F. Province.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Among the last provinces to vote will be the United Provinces and Madras. Again there are different dates in some Provinces for Muslim and non-Muslim elections, as well as for rural and urban elections.

2. Election returns will be announced normally a week or ten days after each election.

3. If by "real show" you mean any kind of conflict it is obviously impossible for me to indicate what will happen and when. There are too many indeterminate factors. No one wants a conflict if it can be avoided. Much depends on the attitude of the British Government. I do not think that a conflict will be precipitated by any party. Every attempt will be made to arrive at some suitable compromise. But no compromise will be suitable or acceptable unless it obviously leads to independence. Probably after the elections there will be a period of some kind of negotiations, an attempt to find an equilibrium so that a constituent assembly when properly elected might function. Another question that will arise immediately will be the temporary composition of a provisional central government. It is obvious that even during this temporary phase the present Government cannot continue. It is thoroughly discredited in its make-up and personnel. Jinnah is taking up a completely intransigent attitude.

4. I have already visited a number of provinces and I propose to go to the Frontier in about ten days. I do not think I shall do very much travelling after that for election purposes. Probably during February I shall visit a number of districts in the United Provinces and possibly Bihar. There has been no real contest so far as the general seats (non-Muslim) are concerned, and I have not undertaken any tour for them. The real contest is in regard to Muslim and certain special seats. Therefore I have not been to southern India at all this time and I do not propose to go there. In fact I am only visiting certain selected parts of the country. India is so big that it will take me many months to tour the whole country. Such touring is not confined to the big centres but involves visiting the interior.

5. I have not so far been accompanied by any representative of the foreign press. Usually there are some Indian correspondents with me, but the extraordinarily strenuous conditions of these tours in the interior are more than most correspondents can stand. Some of them have broken down under the strain. You must remember that travelling facilities are primitive in the interior and I move about rapidly with little rest. Then I come back home and take two or three days' rest.

6. Our publicity arrangements are very unsatisfactory and normally we rely upon the Indian press. I believe there is some kind of a press



bureau functioning but I doubt if it is doing much. I am sending your name and address to it.

7. I am afraid that it is rather late for you to think in terms of coming here for the elections, but of course the time after the elections will be equally important from many points of view. In India, as elsewhere, the scene is a changing one and is full of interest for any student of current affairs. At any time some kind of a crisis might develop. So it is difficult to suggest any particular time. Probably in April we shall have the annual session of the Congress. After April comes the hot weather when most foreign correspondents and others have a tendency to wilt.

8. It is obvious that the importance of the Indian question is great from the international point of view. What happens in India will make a difference to events elsewhere, just as what happens elsewhere must make a difference to the Indian scene. A proper interpretation of the forces at work in India is important in permitting good international relations. I should imagine that you would be peculiarly suited to do this work.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 38. To Fenner Brockway<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 14, 1946

My dear Fenner,

I have received your two letters<sup>2</sup> and have carefully considered what you have written. I am not clear in my mind what good a sudden, short and rather dramatic visit to London might do. But apart from this, it is extraordinarily difficult for people like me to get passport and travel facilities. Some months back I tried to go to Java. I was refused permission. For the last six weeks I have been trying to get a passport for

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Fenner Brockway asked Jawaharlal to visit London for three purposes: 1. "To state India's case to the world as an ultimatum to Britain and as a challenge to all nations". 2. To deliver the "message of world order" which he would do if he were to speak at the United Nations Assembly as head of a free India delegation. 3. To inaugurate a conference of the British Centre Against Imperialism.

Burma and Malaya. I have received no final answer yet in spite of reminders. I do not think any private visit is going to be allowed by the Government of India but the real reason is that it is hardly possible for me to leave India during the next two months of electioneering. Immediately after that probably we shall have to take vital decisions. And again it will be difficult for me to go. My colleagues here do not like the idea at all. I fear therefore that there is little chance of my going during the next three months, or possibly more.

You suggest that I should send you in writing the speech which I would have delivered to the United Nations if I had been a delegate. I find it impossible to write a speech in the air, more especially when the situation changes from day to day. If I was actually a delegate I would probably make notes of my speech overnight. Anything that I said would naturally commit to a large extent the National Congress. I can hardly go about consulting people as to what I might have said if the occasion arose for it.

I have already met Sorensen,<sup>3</sup> Wyatt<sup>4</sup> and Mrs. Wallhead Nichol.<sup>5</sup> I hope to meet them and other members of the Parliamentary Delegation<sup>6</sup> again before the end of this month.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Reginald W. Sorensen (1891-1971); Labour M.P., 1929-31, 1935-66; member, Parliamentary Delegation to India, 1946; active in the India League.
4. Woodrow Lyle Wyatt; Labour M.P.; member, Parliamentary Delegation to India, 1946; personal assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps on Cabinet Mission to India, 1946.
5. Muriel Edith Nichol; Labour M.P.; member, Parliamentary Delegation to India, 1946.
6. A Parliamentary Delegation of ten members, led by Prof. Robert Richards, arrived in India on 5 January 1946. It spent a month and met all the important political leaders. On its return it reported to the British Parliament that India was fit for independence.

### 39. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 17, 1946

My dear Krishna,  
I received your cable about some members of the Parliamentary Delegation a few days ago. I have already met most of the Labour members

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

and the Liberals. I have not met the Conservative members so far. There is just a chance of my meeting some of them in Allahabad later. We have had interesting talks which might bear fruit. Sorensen has been helpful in telling me of the activity of the India League and other organisations.

I might mention that the press account stating that I had called the delegation a joke is not strictly accurate. It is difficult to correct all the misreporting of the press. Normally I speak in Hindustani and am reported in English, usually by a person who knows neither of the languages well. What I had said was that we would welcome any person who comes here in a friendly way and whether there were any other results or not personal contacts were always useful. But it was a joke that Parliament should try to find out facts about India after 150 years of British rule.

I think I have asked you once whether there was any truth in the press report that you were coming to India. I hope there is. I should very much like to meet you and I am sure it will do you good to renew your acquaintance with the Indian scene.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

#### 40. To Stafford Cripps<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 27, 1946

My dear Stafford,

I received your letter of December 12th some time back when I was at Karachi. I have been continually touring about and have not been keeping well. I have only just returned to Allahabad for a few days' rest.

There was another reason for some delay in answering your letter. You asked me to tell you how I pictured matters developing after the elections. Also what action I would lay down to be followed after the election, if I happened to be the Viceroy. These questions could not be answered casually and I wanted to return home and have a little leisure before I sent a reply to you.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.



Of course the obvious answer is that I would not be in the Viceroy's position, or rather that, even as Viceroy, I would not have followed the line of action which has landed the Viceroy and the British Government in their present position. But that is not a good enough answer. Am I then to trace past events and criticise them? That might help a little in developing an argument but not in suggesting a solution. Yet some reference to past events seems necessary, although you are sufficiently acquainted with them.

In every country there are a number of forces at work and they usually succeed in establishing some kind of equilibrium, stable or unstable. For the moment this equilibrium represents the balance of forces. It is a changing equilibrium. In India a certain dominant external force — the British power — prevented, for more than a century, the internal forces from establishing an equilibrium between themselves. Their growth and interaction were limited and arrested and an artificial facade was imposed upon the country. Because of this arrested growth, problems piled up and could find no solution. Many relics of past ages continued which would normally have been swept away. It is these relics that constitute some of our most important problems today.

British policy, in order to maintain British rule, was inevitably one of balance and counterpoise, one of preventing unity and encouraging fissiparous tendencies, and one of protecting and strengthening the reactionary elements in the country. Even when British policy spoke a different language, it functioned in much the same way, for its agents in India did not change or think differently. The final word in practice lay with these agents and they continued to represent the old style imperialist authoritarian tradition. Because of this, British policy could not really change; it wobbled occasionally, spoke in two voices, postponed and procrastinated, and meanwhile, carried on in the old way. This old way was essentially one opposed to the progressive and vital forces in the country and of encouragement to every tendency which was reactionary and obscurantist. Incapable of solving any of India's urgent problems, it relied more and more on persons and groups who were usually corrupt and chiefly interested in opposing change.

In pursuance of this policy, separate electorates were introduced, the seed of the poisonous tree that has grown now to poison all our national life and prevent progress. With the growth of the national movement, the British Government and its agents intensified their support of separatist tendencies. In particular they encouraged the growth of the Muslim League. All other organisations were more or less swept away by the Congress, only the League remained and so the League was helped in a variety of ways. Even today in the elections many government

officials are actively helping the League candidates. The voters' registers were prepared and manipulated in such a way as to favour the League and large numbers of bogus names were introduced. In Benares we have the remarkable instance of more names on the Muslim register than there are Muslim inhabitants in the city.

During recent years (war years) Linlithgow and Co., much as they disliked Jinnah, still did everything to help the League. Your proposals made in 1942 on behalf of the War Cabinet, acknowledging the right of secession, gave a tremendous fillip to the League's demand for Pakistan and increased its prestige.<sup>2</sup> Last year's Simla Conference failing because the Viceroy accepted Jinnah's veto, also led Muslims to think that the League, supported by the British Government, was too powerful to be opposed by them.

As a whole Muslims are politically backward, with no sufficiently developed middle class and hardly any notable leaders, with the exception of Jinnah. They can be more easily moved by a religious cry than the Hindus. There has been scandalous corruption wherever Muslim League Ministries have functioned. There is no doubt that the League is at present the most powerful organisation amongst them but the way this has been built up is strikingly similar to the Nazi technique. It has no constructive approach or objectives and its leaders have openly said that they base their appeal on hatred. There has been and is plenty of hooliganism and violence against political opponents.<sup>3</sup> Pakistan as such is hardly understood or appreciated by most members of the League; it is a sentimental slogan which they have got used to. There is at the same time a definite revolt against it among Muslims and I believe this is growing. It is impossible to say how many think this way. Generally upper class Muslims are for the League with a mass following. The Shias are against it, so is the Jamiat, weaver and artisan class, which is

2. The draft declaration of 1942 proceeded on the assumption that partition would in the last resort provide a solution of the Hindu-Muslim question. "His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed subject only to the right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides. With such non-acceding Provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution, giving them the same full status as the Indian Union, and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down."
3. About this time, at several places in the U.P., supporters of the Muslim League had behaved violently towards Nationalist Muslim leaders. For example, on 4 October 1945, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, president of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind, was attacked and insulted by Muslim Leaguers.



a kind of depressed class among the Muslims. Then Momins have definitely begun to think along class lines and resent the upper class leadership of the Muslim League.

During the past five years the League has had a clear field in India. The Congress was almost continually under ban and in prison. We have thus had no approach to the Muslim masses and they have been fed by lies both by the League and Government propagandists. I presume you know how the Congress has been slandered in England and America by British spokesmen and the most obviously false things said about it. During the last three months we have again started approaching the Muslim masses and the results have been remarkably encouraging. Probably they will not affect the elections much as we have not had enough time. But they are laying the foundations of solid work among the Muslim masses which will make a difference before very long.

I shall not prophesy the results of the provincial elections. We shall know them soon enough; the Assam results are just out. It is clear that so far as the general seats are concerned the Congress is in an unassailable position. No other organisation counts. That applies largely to the scheduled classes' seats also. Leaving out the Muslims for the present the Congress represents today practically all sections of the Indian people as it has never done previously. Among the Muslims it has a strong core and there are others who support it. But it is true that the Muslim League still commands the great majority of Muslim votes. In the elections the Congress will win some Muslim seats on the direct Congress ticket, other seats will be won by Nationalist Muslims cooperating with the Congress, but the majority will go to the Muslim League. Even in these last named, there will be a considerable minority voting against the League.

In the result there is likely to be a Congress majority in eight provinces, that is in all except Sind, the Punjab and Bengal. In none of these three will there be a clear Muslim League majority nor can there be a purely Muslim League government in any of them. Some kind of coalitions are likely to be formed in these three. The Muslim League has alienated all other groups and it may find it difficult to form a coalition. In Sind the Congress might join a coalition.

Elections and their results apart, there is extreme tension in the country, a sense of intolerable strain, and an overwhelming urge to change the present government in the Centre and the provinces. Elections have somewhat held people in check but as soon as these are over, events, of their own motion, will march swiftly. They can be controlled by definite policies being laid down and acted upon leading to swift change. Delay might well lead to disastrous consequences. What happened in Calcutta



two months ago and what is happening in Bombay now are significant signs of the fires below the surface. A spark lights them. In a sense the Congress represents these forces but they are stronger than any organisation and can be controlled only to a limited extent and provided conditions are favourable.

Jinnah appears to be wholly intransigent and threatens bloodshed and rioting if anything is done without his consent. It is impossible of course to hang up everything simply because Jinnah does not agree. (That is what the British Government has done so far with very unfortunate consequences. But this cannot be repeated). I do not think there is much in Jinnah's threat. The Muslim League leadership is far too reactionary (they are mostly landlords) and opposed to social change to dare to indulge in any form of direct action. They are incapable of it, having spent their lives in soft jobs. If it is once made clear that violence on their part will not help them at all, they will subside. But it is very likely there may be riots, especially in the U.P., probably encouraged by local officials and the police who want to discredit the Congress. There will be no real strength behind them. Even if there was some strength it is impossible to hold up everything for fear of them. The other consequences are of graver import.

The British Government has to decide once for all its policy in regard to this matter. It can no longer sit on the fence. It cannot force Pakistan on India, in the form demanded by Jinnah, for that certainly will lead to civil war. Jinnah's demand included Assam, Delhi, the whole of the Punjab and Bengal, the N.W.F. Province, Sind, Baluchistan. By no stretch of imagination can Assam, Delhi, and large parts of Punjab and Bengal, which have a non-Muslim majority, be included in Pakistan. Probably even in these elections the North West Frontier Province will declare against the League. Even if the Muslims as a whole support the League and Pakistan, that can only mean a division of both Punjab and Bengal. Jinnah has indignantly rejected this. What then? Compulsion of other areas to join Pakistan? That is inconceivable and impossible. Thus the crux of the Pakistan issue is this: A Pakistan consisting of only part of Punjab and part of Bengal, or no separation at all.

As a matter of fact the question of Pakistan or separation cannot be considered apart from the question of defence and allied subjects. At any time this could not be ignored. In today's context with trouble brewing in the Middle East, this becomes a paramount consideration, for without proper defence there is no security for either Pakistan or Hindustan. Even if there were two separate states they would have to

evolve a joint scheme of defence. Defence includes foreign affairs, communications etc.

From the point of view of defence there can be no real Pakistan, that is an independent state. Even if separated it could not continue independent. At the same time we have to consider a widely felt sentiment in favour of it and sentiments cannot always be ignored. I do not think it is deep and the consequences are not realised. Indeed no one knows what Pakistan is. It is worth remembering also that the Pakistan sentiment is stronger in provinces which can never form part of a Pakistan. It is weakest near the Frontier regions, and weak also in Punjab and Bengal. A vote for the Muslim League is no vote for Pakistan. It is only a vote for a popular organisation which represents a certain solidarity of Indian Muslims.

I suppose you know what the Congress has proposed from time to time to solve the communal problem. It has stated that there should be a federation of autonomous units with a certain minimum list of compulsory common subjects. These have not been enumerated but presumably they will be defence, foreign affairs, communications, currency etc. In addition there should be an optional list of common subjects which can be agreed to or not as the federating unit desires. This gives the maximum of freedom and self-reliance to the units and a sense of functioning as they wish. Further there can be any number of safeguards for minorities etc., and finally a supreme court should be empowered to protect minority rights. Finally if a definite area expresses its will clearly in favour of separatism and this is feasible, no compulsion will be exercised to force it to remain in the federation or union. But it cannot take other areas away with it against their will, and there must be a clear decision by plebiscite of all the adult voters of that area. I cannot imagine any more generous and far-reaching offer. Yet Jinnah refuses both the plebiscite and the demarcation of the area according to the wishes of the inhabitants. It seems clear that he is not after Pakistan but something entirely different, or perhaps he is after nothing at all except to stop all change and progress. As a matter of fact it has become increasingly clear that Pakistan is just a fantasy which cannot be realised in the present context of India and the world.

This is the background. I fear I have written at length and yet not as I would like to have done. For the problem is not one so much of logical analysis as of psychological appreciation. Deep passions are at work and they must be understood and appreciated before that situation itself can be understood. What I have found wholly lacking in statements and speeches made in London is this psychological approach.

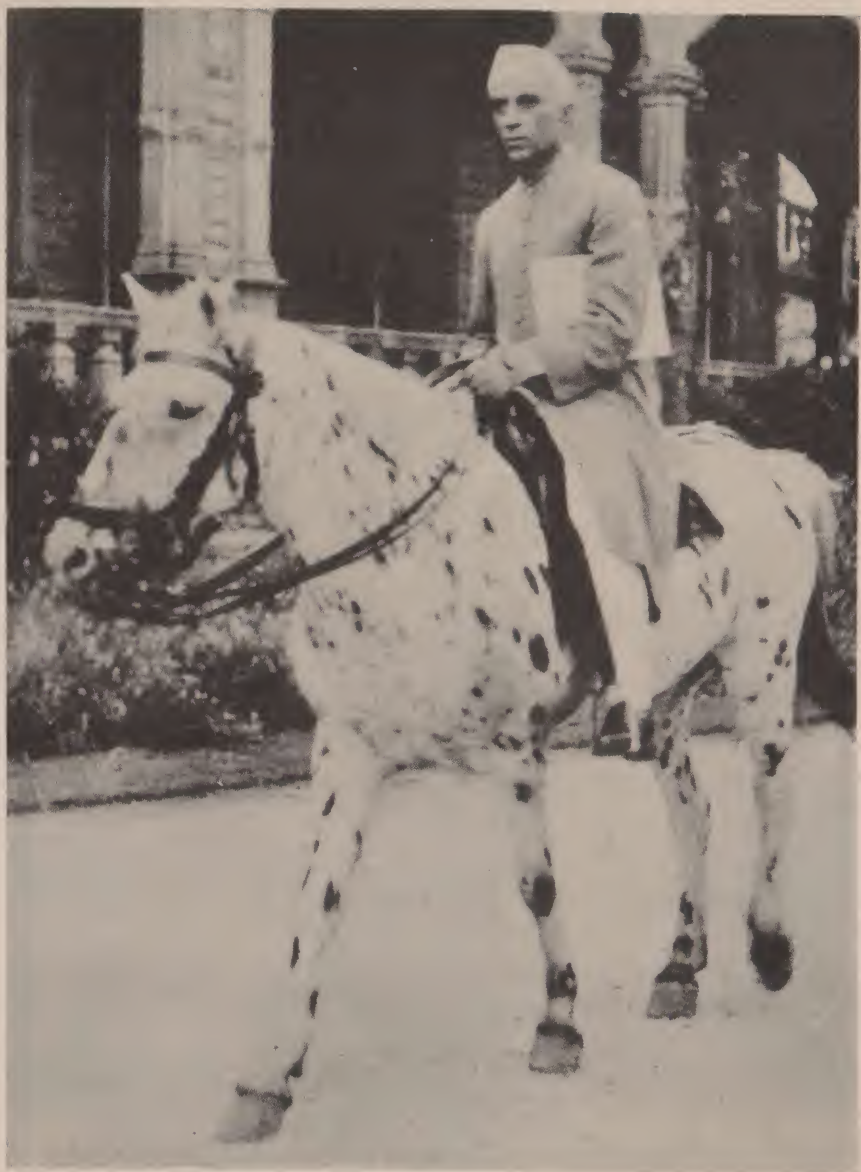


Apart from the long past history of India and England, the past six years of war have had a powerful effect on shaping the Indian mind and new forces are at work, which I can understand but not easily fathom. The astonishing reaction of the country to the I.N.A. trials was very significant. Perhaps I have a deeper understanding of Indian happenings than most people even in India, for I have made myself receptive to India's moods. And yet I feel sometimes that I am rather out of date. To ignore these deeply significant changes in India as well as the passionate fervour which underlies them is to misjudge everything. Any action based on this lack of judgment is likely to be wrong and to lead to unhappy results. It is not enough to wish well and to be conscious of one's own rectitude.

What then is to be done? The first thing is for the British Government to declare in the clearest terms possible that they accept the independence of India and the constitution of free India will be determined by India's elected representatives without any interference from the British Government or any other external authority. The constitution-making body will be constituted on a wide franchise and will have final authority. The future relations with England will also be determined by this constitution-making body and representatives of this body and of the British Government will meet to consider problems of mutual concern which arise when a transfer of power takes place. If in regard to any such matter there is no agreement this can be referred to an impartial tribunal. But the question of independence itself cannot be referred to any external authority and must be settled by the constituent assembly itself.

Further that the British Government should declare that it considers any division of India harmful in India's interest, as well as in the interest of any party or religious group. Also that it would weaken the defence of India at a time when defence is a paramount necessity. Without full security there can be no progress, or solution of India's urgent problems. The British Government cannot therefore encourage any division of India. This matter must be decided by the people of India themselves. It is desirable however that the fullest autonomy should be given to the constituent units of the Indian federation and every safeguard provided for the protection of minority interests. Defence and allied subjects would in any event be common subjects. There may be a further provision that if the inhabitants of any territorial area are clearly of opinion, as ascertained by a plebiscite on a specific and defined issue, that they wish to separate, then they should be allowed to do so, subject to feasibility and the avoidance of any compulsion on any group, within a well-defined area, which does not





AT SIMLA, JULY 1945



AT SIMLA, JULY 1945

want to separate. Also, even so, the problem of defence must be tackled together. Thus in the event of separation, defence should still be common, and the lines of demarcation should be such as to keep, as far as possible, those who want to separate and those who do not want to do so, apart from each other. This would particularly apply to Bengal and Punjab.

Obviously difficulties will arise if the N.W.F. Province does not want to separate and northern Punjab wants to do so. This would make Pakistan almost impossible. I am personally convinced that if it was once made clear that the British Government would in no way encourage Pakistan, this agitation would lose its force rapidly.

Apart from a general declaration by the British Government in favour of Indian independence and their readiness to hand over power to elected representatives of the Indian people, two immediate questions arise: the formation of a constitution-making body and the establishment of a provisional central national government. Both these are essential. In both these the less interference there is from the British Government the better. Probably the easiest and the fairest way to deal with the situation is to ask the newly formed provincial governments to confer together and make suggestions. This avoids dealing with parties as such. It is highly likely that all provincial governments will cooperate in this task. If, by any chance, any one of them does not wish to do so, it can stay out. Both the constituent assembly and the provisional Central Government should thus be formed in accordance with the suggestions of the elected provincial governments. This provisional Centre, though functioning more or less within the existing constitution, should in practice not be interfered with by the Viceroy or the British Government. It will be replaced by the new government of free India as soon as the constitution framed by the constituent assembly comes into effect. There is no reason why all this should take more than a year.

If these steps are taken new avenues open out for peaceful change and progress. But it is essential that no interference should take place on the part of the British Government or their agents in India, and there should be the conviction among the Indian people that they can at last work out their own destiny.

If such an approach is made I do not think there will be or can be any real trouble instigated by the Muslim League. There may be some petty riots in some cities. In effect even their demand for so-called self-determination is conceded, but not in the fantastic way demanded. Once it is realised that the people of India themselves have to decide finally, they will look to each other and not abroad and will try their



utmost to pull together and to come to agreed conclusions. The alternative to that is conflict and no one wants that.

I have not referred to the States. I am convinced that the States offer no great difficulty provided only Pakistan is not in the picture. If there is still Pakistan as a possibility this will frighten away some States from joining the Indian Union and enable some others to raise objections and make excuses. All of them, I think, (barring perhaps Hyderabad) realise now that there is no future for them except as autonomous units of the federation. Of course only the larger States—probably a dozen or at most twenty—can form such units. The others must be absorbed in the provinces or amalgamate together to form a big enough unit. The States must have the same or similar democratic liberties and forms of administration as the provinces. Only such States can be admitted into the constituent assembly and the new federation. Representatives from the States will have to be more or less on the same basis as from the provinces.

I have written at far greater length than I intended to and yet I have written under pressure of time. If I had some leisure I would have been more concise. But anyway what I have written will give you some idea of how my mind is working. All my colleagues do not think exactly like me but I think that our main conclusions are much the same. Indeed I would say that politically thinking India, Congress or non-Congress (apart from the Muslim League), thinks more or less on these lines, with one big exception. That exception consists of a considerable number of young men and women who are convinced that only out of a big struggle can something worthwhile be achieved. They have hardened and they represent the prevailing sentiment of the Indian people. And so if anything untoward happens there is immediately a flare-up. If a way out to independence in the near future, with recognition of it and an approach to it now, is opened, then it may be possible to control the situation in India and proceed peacefully and co-operatively. Otherwise events take the reins and go ahead leading to what I do not know.

It is this emotional and psychological aspect of the Indian problem that is so vitally important today. It can only be apprehended by outsiders imaginatively and with sympathy for a long-suffering people who have long endured frustration and repression. That imagination has been wholly absent in the past, and so much has been said and done that has hurt the Indian people and scars remain. Apart from happenings in India, Indonesia and Indo-China have created intense bitterness and a conviction that nothing can be expected from the British Government. The gulf has never been so wide and it will not be easy

to bridge it. Yet perhaps it can be bridged even now with a great effort.

At any rate I hope so and work to that end. But if conflict comes, obviously I shall be in the middle of it, for I stand with my people. I stand by them because I believe them to be right on this issue and because I cannot desert them when they are facing dangers and difficulties. But I want to avoid conflict for it is a terrible waste of national energy and it leaves a bad legacy. I have spent enough of my life in conflict and during the years that remain to me I want to build and not to destroy. Everything in India cries aloud for constructive effort, and yet the way to it is barred. Once it is opened, and it can only be opened by independence, then we shall jump ahead.

Forgive me for this infliction. I have hesitated to write to you on these issues, but, since you asked me, I felt I had to do so.

I have met some of the members of the Parliamentary Delegation and hope to meet them and others again before they return.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

#### 41. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 28, 1946

My dear Krishna,

I have to write to you about several matters but I shall do that separately. I am enclosing with this letter<sup>2</sup> a copy of a letter I am sending to Stafford Cripps. This has been drafted in a hurry and is not very satisfactory. Nevertheless it gives my viewpoint and it might help you in understanding it. The letter, I need hardly add, is a personal one and should not be used in any other way. I should not like you to show it to others except perhaps to very special persons.

I am expecting some of the members of the Parliamentary Delegation here this week. Vijayalakshmi is due to arrive in a day or two.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. See *ante*, pp. 138-147.

## 42. To Ali Zaheer<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 30, 1946

My dear Ali Zaheer,

Thank you for your letter<sup>2</sup> of January 16th. I know well that the Shia community has in the past suffered in political representation and otherwise under the system at present prevailing in India. Separate electorates, which have done so much injury to India as a whole and I believe to the Muslims also, have particularly hit the Shias. Normally the Shias have few chances of getting elected by Muslim separate electorates. The argument that can be advanced for separate electorates for Mussalmans as a whole can equally be advanced for the Shias as a minority group among the Muslims of India. But it is clear that this kind of infinite division of the electorate into separate compartments is likely to do grave injury not only to the cause of India as a whole but more especially to the minority communities which are supposed to be protected. The only way out is to have common electorates for all. This matter naturally can only be settled by the goodwill of the parties concerned.

Every community, and indeed every individual, has a right to protection and opportunities for self-development. A free India must guarantee these human rights to everybody. We are apt to look at the problems in the context of today with the third party, that is the British Government, controlling our destinies, and a political and economic system which really ignores the interests of the vast majority of our people to whatever religion they might belong. We think in terms of future jobs or a future place in the legislature. That is important enough but it is only a small part of the problem of providing not for a few but for all in India. A free India will necessarily think in different terms. In providing protection and opportunities of growth to indi-

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Ali Zaheer, who was the president of the All Parties Shia Conference, wrote that "you should give an assurance that the Congress Party accepts the claim of the Shia community for special protection of its political and other rights.... at least so long as separate electorates continue in the country."



viduals and groups, it has to be borne in mind that any system based on unfair representation cannot be stable or just.

What the future constitution of India will be is more than I can say. Ultimately the people of India will decide as they choose. Whatever that decision may be, it should ensure the sense of freedom and growth to all groups and communities. I have an idea that that system will be very different from our present system. In such a system the legitimate claims of the Shias, as of others, should be borne in mind. But you will realise that the extension of the principle of separate electorates does not really protect and isolates the community concerned from others. Thus instead of each thinking of the good of the other we have each thinking and working in separate compartments and forgetting the whole. Obviously also we cannot think in terms of the majority overriding the minority wishes. Provisions have to be made to prevent this. All these questions and others will have to be carefully considered in the new context and I trust that the solution we find in cooperation with others will go a long way to remove the grievances of the Shia community, as of others.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 43. To Hansraj Muljee<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
February 4, 1946

Dear Hansrajji,

Thank you for the cigarettes you have sent. As for the cigarette-holder, please do not trouble yourself as I have been able to obtain it.

Regarding what you say in your letter of the 12th Jan., the subject is too big to be discussed in a letter. Also the political situation is rather fluid at present and I think we should wait for two or three months at least before embarking on any big venture. I should like to discuss this matter with you personally. Perhaps when I come to Bombay next we could do so.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I like travelling by air and I think that a time will come when this will be desirable as a normal way of travelling. Just at present, however, I do not think it is worthwhile to get a special plane for the purpose. Much of my travelling has to be done by car, as I have to go short distances in remote villages. I suggest therefore that you need not purchase a plane for my use. Thank you all the same for your kind offer.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 44. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
February 5, 1946

My dear Krishna,

I have just received your air letter of the 28th January.

About Maulana Azad and the presidentship of the Congress, I should like him to be re-elected but I think this is unlikely. Normally we change presidents every year and it is very unusual for the same person to be elected for two consecutive years. I was elected in this way once but we were then in the midst of an election. The Maulana has been functioning as President for over five years now as there have been no elections during this period. So, except for very special reasons, a new person will be elected. I think the special reasons exist but I doubt very much if they will be considered sufficient to override the usual practice. The real difficulty is the Maulana himself who is not inclined to stand for election. He is keeping bad health and feels very tired. He is terribly sensitive and agrees to stand only if there is practically a unanimous demand for it and no counter proposal. That is, he does not like a contested election. Probably there will be no real contest and if Maulana's name is proposed, he will withdraw it.

So far we have not discussed this matter in Working Committee or even elsewhere though there is some speculation in the press. The names usually mentioned are: Maulana's, Vallabhbhai Patel's and mine. I am clear in my own mind that I should not stand. I do not want

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

to be bound down by office if I can help it and I can function much more satisfactorily if I have a certain freedom.

There are, as you no doubt realise, all manner of forces at play in the country and within the Congress. It is not possible to order things about from the top without paying full attention to these forces and currents.

About your second point I agree generally with your analysis of the situation and I think that is on the whole appreciated here. There is going to be no abandonment of independence whatever happens. On other matters there may be room for adjustment. What I wrote to Cripps—I sent you a copy of the letter—is the minimum. Once independence is admitted and a freely elected constituent assembly with unfettered powers, then other matters can be discussed within that framework. An immediate issue will be the formation of the transitional central government. There may be trouble over it. The real difficulty on our side has been of course the communal situation. This will be governed to some extent by the results of the elections.

I have written to you separately on other matters. I am going out on tour again today. During the next month or 5 weeks I shall be mostly touring with brief halts at Allahabad.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

#### 45. To Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee<sup>1</sup>

Lucknow  
9 February, 1946

Srijut C.B. Gupta has told me about his interview with you. We are naturally anxious that you should not endanger your life, and we are also convinced that the treatment towards many political prisoners is bad, and even ordinary facilities are denied to them. Personally, I think, and many others are of the same opinion, that at the present moment hunger strike on these issues is unfortunate.

1. This letter was published in the *Hindusthan Standard*, 11 February 1946. Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, accused in the Kakori conspiracy case, had spent 25 years in prison. He was on hunger strike in the Lucknow district jail in protest against the ill-treatment by the authorities. He broke his fast on 6 February 1946 when the wish of Jawaharlal that he should give up his fast was conveyed to him.



Big changes are in the air, or in the alternative, a conflict will result. Naturally, it must be the function of any popular government to put an end to these questions by releasing political prisoners. Even if for temporary period some prisoners are kept in jails, they must have all facilities. This is the definite policy of the Congress, and our own people will see to its fulfilment.

About the present conditions Sj. Gupta and others are trying their best to get them changed for the better.

As for newspapers, I suggest that the Government be told that we will gladly pay for them, if they are willing to supply them. Other matters too should be and will be pressed. But at the present moment the decision does not rest with us. I hope that the Government authorities will see the reasonableness of the demands made, and will agree to suggestions made therein. And I hope that you will not persist in hunger-strike and such things, which may endanger your life, at any rate, ~~run~~ your health. We have to keep ourselves fit for future work. Therefore, I trust that you will give up the hunger-strike.

## CONGRESS AND ELECTIONS

## II. The Campaign in the Provinces





## THE PUNJAB AND THE N.W.F.P.

### 1. Post-War Problems<sup>1</sup>

After remaining in the Kashmir Valley for one month I am going down. The recent contact with the Himalayan range, which has a glorious connection with ancient Indian history, culture and civilization, has produced a tremendous effect upon my mind which has now become fresh.

I have received invitations from several places in the Punjab, but I am sorry that, despite my keen desire to meet old friends and colleagues and renew acquaintances and discuss problems with them, I cannot in the present circumstances undertake a tour of the province.

It is high time that you should concentrate all your efforts in finding out a solution to the problems that are facing India and the world. Never in history have so many revolutions occurred as in our age. The atomic bomb, which has now been invented, has created new problems for humanity and has changed the history of the world. Yet, Indians are still engrossed with old worn-out controversies and have been least, it seems, affected by these revolutions. Neither prayers nor slogans are of any help to solve these problems.

The colossal poverty of India is disturbing me every moment and it is my first concern to find ways and means to eliminate it. India has a glorious past and her history is rich in culture and civilisation. What is the reason for the downfall of this country? The sole reason for the extreme deterioration is that our people are too much engrossed with insignificant matters such as the caste system, petty jealousies and party factions.

I may point out that Punjabis have more latent energy, more enthusiasm and a keen desire for freedom than the people of many other provinces. Although the Punjab is superior in many respects to several other provinces, its energy is being wasted in party bickerings and personal squabbles at the cost of the larger interests of the country.

1. Speech at Murree, 21 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 23 August, *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 August, *The Tribune*, 23 August and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24 August 1945.

Countries like Britain, Russia, America and China have made tremendous sacrifices in the present gigantic struggle. Similar sacrifices have not yet been made by India in the cause of her freedom. Sacrifices made by the Indians are quite insignificant. I have no intention of minimising the sacrifices of my countrymen during the last three years. You all know through what a regime of repression some provinces have passed and how efforts were made by authorities to crush the national movement in the country.

Ever since the first noncooperation movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi, the country has made remarkable progress. During this time the people have gained an unprecedented mass consciousness, because of which there is an unusual awakening in this vast sub-continent. It is entirely due to this awakening that the Government miserably failed to crush the spirit of the country when it passed through a fiery ordeal during the last three years. Though the Congress was an unlawful organisation during all these years, the enthusiasm of the people has not abated in the least. During the short period after my release, I have clearly seen a new life among the masses who are in quest of freedom.

I exhort the Punjabis in particular to derive the maximum benefit from the latent energy and unbounded enthusiasm and to use them for securing freedom. The country has progressed despite several blunders. No power on earth can now stand in the way to freedom.

On the one hand, the Muslim League has raised the issue of Pakistan, while on the other hand, we are thinking of the economic, political, social and cultural problems affecting us and the world. India cannot stand detached as a unit unmindful of what is happening all over the world. Some people are clamouring for vivisection of our country while in the world there is a trend towards federation of several countries in the interest of future safety. At the same time, nobody can compel a unit to join a particular federation against its will.

The war has come to an end. Several intricate problems are awaiting solution. The question of eliminating India's poverty and unemployment following the cessation of hostilities must be tackled forthwith. The Government has been doing several things under the cover of war necessity. The Defence of India Rules should now go and a normal state must be restored. The present Government is absolutely incapable of handling successfully all these important problems.

Another problem which has been constantly disturbing my peace of mind for the last few days is the treatment that is and will be meted out to those Indians in Burma and Malaya who joined the so-called Indian National Army to fight the British from the side of Japan. I



was of the opinion three years ago and am still of the opinion that the leaders and others of this army have been misguided in many ways, and have failed to appreciate the larger consequence of their unfortunate association with Japan. But it would be a supreme tragedy if these officers and other men are liquidated by way of punishment by the British. Their action in joining the enemy was absolutely wrong and unfortunate. But they are brave men and they have been actuated by the love of their country. It would shock us deeply if their precious lives perish. Freedom cannot be secured by the help of any foreign nation. But the country would expect a lenient treatment towards them and would like to know what is happening behind the scenes to decide their fate. A free India can establish happy relations with Britain, but any hasty action against them might jeopardise that future relation.

I appeal to all of you to sink your personal and party differences and to work unitedly to solve the bigger issue of the country's freedom.

## 2. A New Awareness<sup>1</sup>

Question: Can you say something about the talks you have been having with the Congress leaders since your arrival here?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The main purpose of my visit to the Frontier Province is to meet my old friends after a long period of three years and get their impression of the past events in order to fully grasp the present situation prevailing in the country. Within such a short time it is certainly not possible to have direct contacts with the public. But nevertheless I have availed myself of the opportunity in discussing numerous topics with Frontier leaders to enable me to study a good deal of Frontier affairs.

Q: What is the change you find in Indian politics after your release from prison?

JN: In consequence of both national and international events one gratifying point for me is that the masses have become more enlightened. Their reactions to the current affairs are quite mature. Relations

1. Interview to the press, Nathiagali, 24 August 1945. From *The Tribune*, 25 August 1945.



between Britain and India are better understood than before. The urge for freedom is potent in their hearts. What is needed is that they must be led in the right direction towards our national goal.

Q: Will it be worthwhile to grant the principle of Pakistan in the interest of India's independence?

JN: The recent statement of the Congress President, Maulana Azad, has made the Congress position abundantly clear.<sup>2</sup> So far as the right of self-determination is concerned, the Congress has acknowledged it much earlier and the provinces are given the right of secession if they desire. But the Pakistan scheme is still vague and has not been fully enunciated. Several complications are apt to arise when the scheme is given a practical shape. Leaving aside economic consequences on the body politic in India, enforcement of Pakistan is a sort of foreign element having religious and cultural affinities and will remain in force in both the so-called Pakistan and Hindustan areas for all time. For instance, Muslims living in the Hindustan area will have an extreme type of natural kinship with their co-religionists in the Pakistan area and *vice versa*. In this manner several complications will crop up frequently in both the areas which will be very difficult for both the governments to cope with.

Another point in this connection is worth mentioning. In the Punjab and Bengal, which might become Pakistan areas, neither the League nor non-League circles want partition. Now, in all fairness to every community in these provinces, how will it be possible to grant the right of self-determination to one community in defiance of the other? After all, Pakistan or any other scheme cannot be forced on an unwilling community in order to placate the other. Besides, the result will be calamitous for all, because the equilibrium of the country's life will be upset, which no patriotic Indian would like to happen.

2. See *ante*, pp. 71-74.



### 3. Challenge to the Punjab Government<sup>1</sup>

On stepping into the Punjab I would like to sound a note of warning to the Punjab Ministry. If any prohibitory order is served upon me by the Punjab Government, I will tear it to pieces, kick it and defy it, whatever the consequences. It touches my self-respect and honour if any Deputy Commissioner or police officer issues such an order of restriction on my movement. The world has undergone a revolutionary and a tremendous change, but the Punjab Government is lying unmoved like a stone. Such orders are not obeyed in the twentieth century. The Punjab Government is living in the sixteenth century. There is police and I.C.S. raj in this province.

The Punjab Government has shown its true colours in the Frontier Gandhi's episode at Attock bridge.<sup>2</sup> Either the Khizr<sup>3</sup> Ministry had a hand in the affair or else it was quite impotent before the police and the Deputy Commissioner.

Despite perfect tranquillity in the Punjab during the last three years, the Punjab Government's attitude had been most reprehensible, disgraceful and mean. The Punjab Congress leaders were also responsible for submitting meekly to all such orders. Conditions in the Punjab are bound to change in the near future.

I allude to the Pakistan demand<sup>4</sup> of the Muslim League and the recent speech<sup>5</sup> of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, President of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, and ask what sacrifices for the freedom of the country have been made by both these communal organisations put

1. Speech at Rawalpindi, 24 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 26 August, *The Hindustan Times*, 26 August, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 27 August 1945.
2. On 22 July 1945, Ghaffar Khan was arrested at Attock for violation of an order prohibiting him from entering or making speeches in the Punjab.
3. Malik Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana (b. 1900); Prime Minister of the Punjab, 1942-47.
4. After the failure of the Simla Conference, Jinnah declared that the Muslim League had offered cooperation in an interim government only because of the war. As the war was over the need now was to go ahead with plans for a permanent settlement necessarily on the basis of Pakistan, on which the League would never surrender.
5. S.P. Mookherjee said on 19 August 1945 that the Hindus had not only been deprived of their legitimate rights, but had also been crushed politically and economically by the Government. "In such conditions it is the duty of every Hindu to fight for his rights and sacrifice everything to protect them."



together? Their record of work has been nil except for the mere criticism of the Congress and exploiting the masses in the name of religion. These organisations have never participated in actual fight, which would have demonstrated their real worth. I would like to know what campaigns were launched by the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League? They have never been put to test. They have never translated their sayings into action. All their work has been a paper business. Even the leadership is not practical at all. The Congress is the only political organisation that has come out with flying colours after every severe test.

Despite the victory in the war, the British empire will be quite incapable of shouldering its future responsibilities. It must grant to India the mastery of its own destiny.

The Indian National Congress is the only organisation which can deliver the goods. Its doors are open to every individual, irrespective of caste, creed or colour and it is the only competent body to lead the country to its destined goal of independence. I consider it a Himalayan blunder for any communal or religious organisation to dabble in politics. A communal organisation can never think for the good of the country as a whole. No other organisation except the Congress can successfully fight the battle for freedom. The Congress has a magnificent record of 60 years' service to its credit. If you drift towards communalism the consequences will be a disaster. I am unable to understand the principles of Pakistan. Even its sponsors have so far failed to give a practical shape or a concise and specific definition to Pakistan except by saying that it rested on the principle of self-determination.

I support the recent statement issued by the Congress President on this issue. No country can compel any unit to remain within it under compulsion and against its will. But the days of small countries have gone. It has become imperative for smaller nations to federate, not only in the interest of defence, but also for economic considerations.

The Congress will fight the coming general elections with full vigour, befitting the prestige and honour of a big national organisation.<sup>6</sup> The Congress will lift and throw overboard any organisation that blocks its way and march on crossing all the hurdles. I never bothered myself regarding individual candidates. But I want that the Congress should return such persons as have been true to the organisation in all sorts of stormy weather, unmindful of any other consideration. Merit alone will not be the only criterion for the selection of candidates.

6. On 21 August 1945, it was announced that elections for both the Centre and the provinces would be held as soon as possible.



The coming year or two will prove a landmark in the history of our movement and organisation. The latent energy and the force of an organisation is always tested at the time of a great crisis when its promoters are put to a crucial test. The Congress has proved itself as the most powerful organisation in the country after three years of repression. Party strifes and personal squabbles in the Punjab are always an eyesore to me and a hurdle to progress in the fight for freedom both inside and outside the Congress. Every individual and organisation is liable to err, but there is a deliberate attempt to lower the flag of the organisation by dishonest means.

I exhort the Punjab Congress workers to penetrate into villages where real India lives and to educate the masses on their right of vote. Thousands of workers are required to undertake this job.

I invite the attention of the Punjab's soldier premier in particular to concentrate his attention on the fate of the soldiers and the officers of the Indian National Army as most of them, who are behind the prison bars, are brave Punjabis. According to international law they are not rebels in the true legal term but are only prisoners of war.

#### 4. Pakistan an Outmoded Idea<sup>1</sup>

I went to Kashmir to see the rapidly changing world from the high peaks of mountains and to compare it with the world of the past 25 years and to think of the past and future of India. There is no doubt that India, for whose freedom we are fighting today, is a great country. In ages gone by India ruled over various other countries of Asia, and its civilization and culture spread far and wide.

But why is it that India has gone down today, and is under foreign bondage? It is because of the narrowness of our vision. There is misuse of religion. When the world is experiencing rapid revolutions, it is a pity that Indians are sticking on to their old ideas. Mistrust and partisan spirit and communal bickerings are looming large in India.

1. Speech at Lahore, 25 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 26 August, *The Hindu*, 27 August and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 28 August 1945.

The two atomic bombs have destroyed five lakhs of people in two cities of Japan. Nippon has been compelled to surrender. In spite of their victory, the British have been reduced to a second-rate power as a result of the present war. America and Russia remain the first-rate powers. Revolutions are breaking out in the world and several countries are thinking whether they could save themselves from destruction by drawing themselves in a confederation. But in India we are still fighting among ourselves, not only for offices but for position and power. After the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, India is changing today and drifting rapidly towards a revolution. The Congress is the only organisation which is responsible for bringing about an awakening among the masses and for fighting for their freedom. The Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and other communal organisations oppose the Congress today, but the Congress is their mother. These organisations have so far confined themselves to copying the Congress resolutions and its structure. But in one thing they never try to imitate the Congress — in treading the path of danger, suffering and action. They want to achieve their objects by mere threats. They are not prepared to put themselves to test and danger as the Congress is doing. You must understand the changing world and avoid partisan spirit and strife.

I stress that the talk about Pakistan sounds empty and meaningless in this age of atomic bombs. It becomes ineffective and has no bearing in the context of fast developing changes and the international situation. The scheme of Pakistan aims at division of India into small parts. The Congress views the scheme as one that will endanger the smooth working of free India. We do not want freedom for keeping one part of India under the sword of the other, but we want economic development of India. If some part of India wants separation, the Congress will try to persuade it not to do so, but if it insists on going out of India, the Congress will allow it to do so. Maulana Azad, the Congress President, had made this clear in his statement.

This long story of Pakistan has no place in this fast changing world. The question of its acceptance or rejection does not arise because nobody has yet defined Pakistan, not even Mr. Jinnah, the League President. Pakistan is not in his or in anybody else's pocket to be made over at a moment's notice to anyone.

I advise the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs of the Punjab and Bengal to think twice before embarking upon the division of their province into two. They should bear in mind that, though their religions are different, their culture, civilization and language are the same. The Bengal famine took a toll of five million men. The problems of starvation and nakedness are the real problems in India and they can be



solved only by a national government. The Congress is the largest national organisation of India. The Congress alone can deliver the goods, no communal organisation can speak for India. Despite repression the Congress has come out successful and with double the force. It is the only weapon for India's freedom. I appeal to the people to strengthen the Congress — an organisation which is fighting with the British Government and will not rest until India's independence is achieved. I am not very much interested in elections as such, but at certain moments they assume particular importance. The coming elections might become a means of forming a constituent assembly. The Congress will plunge into them with full force and enthusiasm and will oppose all communal or reactionary organisations or groups.

### 5. The Importance of the Coming Elections<sup>1</sup>

I congratulate you for your unusual discipline at yesterday's meeting which was the biggest meeting I have ever addressed throughout my public career. As it was yesterday so it is today. What a pleasing sight to see the vast concourse of people assembled here! Why is it so? It is because as a humble servant of the motherland I have become a symbol to you like the national flag. I belong to the nation and the nation possesses me. Despite the rigours of jail life I consider myself fortunate for the people of India take me into their confidence. My only anxiety is that I should not lower the prestige of India.

Thousands of people, whom you do not know and who are not heard of, have made great sacrifices for the cause of India's freedom. They have strengthened the Congress which has infused a new spirit among the people, especially during the past 25 years. It has driven out the fear complex from people and has changed the entire picture of India. Despite the severest repression and tyranny during the past three years, it has grown in strength. The people have gained a new spiritual power, not in the restricted religious sense, but in a broader fundamental way. It is amazing that, even though lashed hard by tyranny and repression,

1. Speech at Lahore, 26 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 27 August and *The Hindu*, 28 August 1945.



the people have got on their feet and are again ready for struggle, if necessary, and to face the British Government. This is a staggering phenomenon. Millions of people throughout the country are again rallying round the Congress banner. This is a heartening sight. The communal organisations whose main work is to oppose the Congress are its progeny. They are only creating division in the country. Do not get nervous on this account. The various problems which have cropped up have to be solved in this fast changing world. The Congress, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi has infused strength in the soul of India and has brought them nearer their goal of freedom.

What happened during the past three years is nothing short of the happenings of the 1857 Mutiny. The Government quelled the movement and India seemed helpless. But you see today, India is rising with double the force. This is due to the spiritual force which the Congress has roused by its nonviolent struggle that cannot be crushed. The story in other countries has always been different. There the movements have been crushed and they have never been able to revive themselves because they are based on violence. Violence causing destruction all round is the order of the day in the world today.

A recent find is the atomic bomb. Two or three atomic bombs are enough to destroy the city of Lahore and lull its 8 lakh residents to eternal sleep. The atomic bomb is a great brute force and other countries also will find out soon what it is. The war has caused destruction in Europe, Russia and China. If atomic bombs are used, whole countries can be destroyed in days; huge armies and other weapons of war used at present will not be of any avail.

It is difficult to say for how long in the circumstances will the present world survive. In view of this state of the world, questions like that of Pakistan raised in India are meaningless.

The need of the hour is not to raise slogans of Pakistan and put forth schemes of division. Small countries should join in a federation to save themselves from destruction. India is a vast country, and instead of raising this issue of Pakistan, one should think of planning of and increasing the resources and the removal of unemployment. The Congress and myself have been suggesting a federation of free India with other countries, but these minor questions of Pakistan and the like divert our attention from the real issues. It is a pity that the communal organisations in India make the demand for freedom as conditional. They do not treat it as the first and foremost demand. It is so because of fear and mistrust of each other. The Sikhs and the Muslims are brave communities and they have nothing to fear from the Hindus. The Congress has declared that Pakistan is injurious both to India as

a whole and to those who demand it. However, if the Muslims insist on it they will have it. But Pakistan appears to me to be impractical. The Congress has conceded the right of self-determination to the Muslims, but the question is how the idea of Pakistan is to be enforced. You should consider it with a cool head. It is a very complicated problem and that is why the Muslim League has not so far defined it. If Pakistan is given, then parts of the Punjab and Bengal, where the Hindu population is in a majority, will join Hindustan and both the Punjab and Bengal will have to be divided. I cannot imagine for a moment that any sensible Punjabi or Bengali will like his province to be divided in two parts when his culture and language are the same. Pakistan is only a sentimental slogan and unless it is defined, who will give it and who will take it?

If the Punjab is divided into two parts the wealthy part with majority of Hindus and Sikhs will go to Hindustan and Pakistan will not be sound financially also.

This problem will not find a solution because of the efforts of the Congress or the British Government or anyone else. It will be solved of its own accord in accordance with the conditions prevailing in the world. I am sure that even if India is divided, the division will be temporary.

It is impossible to bear any insult to the flag of independence. Its bearers and those who laid down their lives for keeping up the prestige of India in 1942 are martyrs. I appreciate their sacrifices.

Not only India but the whole world is passing through a critical phase. It is not India alone which is faced with complicated problems but such problems also arise in other countries. In this rapidly changing world you should not get nervous but should be ready to solve these problems with calmness. Such problems are bound to arise when India is marching fast towards freedom.

It is being stated that the British Government is going to make a new declaration about India. Probably the offer may be very much similar to what Sir Stafford Cripps brought to this country three years ago. There will be new elections in India and these may lead to a constituent assembly which will frame a constitution for the country. Hence the election has assumed a certain importance at present, and it is imperative that the Congress organisation should be strengthened.

Therefore, whatever our decision, I appeal to you to strengthen the Congress which is the only organisation working for the freedom of the country for the last 60 years. Communal organisations never trod this path. They always put conditions on their participation in the freedom movement. It is obvious therefore that they are not very much interested in the question of freedom. In spite of my differences now and then



with the Congress, I always have bowed to every decision of this mighty organisation because I do not like that the Congress which has been strengthened by your efforts for the last so many years should be weakened in the least. I ask Congressmen to be above a partisan spirit and work as a team and carry the message of the Congress to villages where real India lives. The work of the Congress is the work of the nation. It is not anybody's personal property. If your leaders do not behave well you should warn them. I appeal to the people to enlist themselves as members of the Congress during the coming three months and strengthen the Congress to achieve independence. Now, as the war is over, the British Government should see that the soldiers of the Indian National Army are given a fair and square deal. Any other decision on the part of the British Government is likely to cause unrest in India. Let the soldier premier, Malik Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, take up the case of the members of the Indian National Army, majority of whom happen to be Punjabis, and save their lives.

## 6. Time for Action, not for Slogans<sup>1</sup>

I am ashamed to see insanitary conditions, congested lanes, and ugly houses in Amritsar. I am surprised how you tolerate these conditions. I cannot blame only the municipality or the Government for such conditions. I feel if I have to live under such conditions I would either leave the place or commit suicide. I am sorry that at a place, where you have so many rich men, such conditions should be allowed to prevail. I want to know your conception of freedom. In free India you will have to build cleaner cities and provide ideal sanitation so that even poor people can live and breathe. I am sorry that I am so badly impressed by such conditions every time I visit Amritsar.

You should have no such desire as expressed in certain songs of yours about sacrifice of heads. But you should strive to march forward with courage and devotion. You have sufficiently aroused your enthusiasm. Now what is wanted is solid work as revolution or freedom will not be

1. Speech at Amritsar, 27 August 1945. From *The Tribune*, 28 August 1945.



achieved by shouts or sentimental expression of enthusiasm. The time for slogans is over. We want political work.

The atomic bomb works havoc under which there is no scope for survival of smaller countries. If it is not possible to have a federation of all the free countries of the world, I would favour a federation of Asiatic countries. Pakistan has not been defined so far and is unworkable. The demand itself is futile. The happenings of August 1942 have strengthened the faith of the people in freedom.

The strength and importance of the Congress must be understood as against communal organisations which pursue crude ideals of freedom and have recourse to opportunism. This is a short-sighted policy.

The Congress will fight the elections on the strength of its principles. I would not like to have your vote out of any compromise. The country is solidly behind us.

I urge the Central Government to accord better treatment to soldiers of the Indian National Army and ask the Punjab Government to release all the political prisoners, some of whom have been rotting in jail since the First Great World War.

## 7. Strengthen the Congress<sup>1</sup>

There is much talk of the coming elections for the Central and the Provincial Assemblies. But it must be remembered that elections by themselves have no great significance for the Congress. Like all other things, however, elections have to be judged in the larger context of independence. In this context we may take the elections in our stride, but always keeping in view the principal objective, that is independence.

Presumably the Congress will take full part in the elections and, if so, it will naturally do so with all its strength and prestige. I have no doubt that it will succeed all over India. We shall stand on our own feet for our principles, ideas and objectives and not tone them down for anyone else.

1. Address to press conference, Lahore, 27 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 28 August, *The Hindustan Times*, 29 August and *The Times of India*, 29 August 1945.

We shall no doubt cooperate with those who stand for these ideals and objectives, but there is going to be no effort to win a few seats here and there, at the cost of our ideals.

Elections often bring about confusing factors in the Congress organisation. I would suggest, therefore, that when and if election work comes, it should be done by special boards constituted for the purpose, and this should not interfere with the normal Congress activities carried on by the provincial and the district committees.

Normally, office-bearers of the Congress should refrain from offering themselves as candidates though some may be permitted to contest under special circumstances. This should apply to municipal and district board elections also.

Obviously, all Congress office-bearers must abide by the Congress policy and those who do not agree with it cannot accept office. The Congress policy was last defined by the resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed on August 8, 1942. That resolution stands except for the clause dealing with the possible civil disobedience, which has no application now.

It is for every Congressman to remember that first things come first and the first thing for us is India's freedom. Those who forget this and get entangled in other questions or mutual squabbles, hinder the cause.

The Wavell plan was only a temporary wartime expedient. Whatever be the British declaration, it will now be our aim to seek a permanent solution. It may be accepted or may not be accepted.

I go back from Lahore and the Punjab with vivid memories of the three-day visit. A visit to the Punjab always rather frightens me, because of the exuberance of its people, but it is also an exhilarating experience.

I have long been convinced that the people of the Punjab are magnificent material for the great task of building up a new India. The only difficulty has been that their energies are often diverted into mutually contradictory channels. But I have always found that all these disputes take place at the top, and the masses are not much interested in them, though they are often influenced by them.

So far as the Congress is concerned, it has an enormous, though a vague, hold on the people. The hold is not of the organisation as such, but rather an attraction to the ideals of the Congress. If it can be converted into organisational hold, the Congress will sweep all in front of it. This conversion can take place only with the help of the masses, especially those in the rural areas. The time seems to be ripe for doing this and I appeal to all Congressmen and to all those hundreds of thousands, who have honoured me and moved me by their affectionate welcome, to turn their minds to this vital task. They must all try to forget past



conflicts and differences among themselves and only remember that they are the proud standard bearers of the cause of India's freedom and nationalism, which the Congress has represented so worthily for such a long time.

We want workers, in as large numbers as possible, for this work, but it must be remembered also that, ultimately, it is the quality that always counts, and not mere quantity. Each Congressman must remember that by his acts he may bring honour or dishonour to the Congress. For he must be necessarily judged by higher standards than others. We have ourselves set the standard higher and we must try to live up to it.

I have noticed certain reports in the newspapers about my private conversations here with groups of Congressmen and individuals. I have found many errors in these reports which are likely to give a wrong impression to the readers. My object had been not to impose my wishes with regard to anything, but to guide and help, in so far as I can, in building up a new and strong Congress movement in this province which must not be the property of any group or section, but will represent the mass of Congressmen and will be true to the Congress ideals and objectives. Any attempt to narrow this basis will be undesirable, for Congress must always be a true reflection of the people's will. It is, therefore, on this basis that I want the Congress to develop in this province.

And so with full faith in the people of the province, I take their leave, thanking them again for their exceeding love and generosity for me. I pray that I may prove strong enough to bear the burden of this faith and love.

Question: What is the position of the Congress *vis-a-vis* the Communists? The Congress has no political difference with the Communists at present.

Jawaharlal Nehru: When we judge individuals in the Congress we judge by what they did at a particular time and the Communists should be judged by their action in the past. The August Resolution was the expression of the people's will and when the masses of India decided to take action, those who opposed that decision cut themselves adrift from the people. The Communists by their action had created a gulf between themselves and the people of India.

Q: But the Congress officially had not launched any movement in August 1942.

JN: If I were out of jail I would have myself launched it. The Indian people had launched that struggle. I would be with the Indian people, and not against them.



Q: The Communists merely opposed that section of the August Resolution which related to civil disobedience and when Mahatma Gandhi clarified the position the Communists gave up their opposition to that clause also.<sup>2</sup>

JN: When there is war between India and England, anyone who is for differentiation is on the other side.

Q: What is your opinion about sabotage in those days?

JN: Sabotage is a very vague word. There were certain acts which were bad and undesirable. But on the other hand it amazes me how little of sabotage was done. In places like Ballia the whole British administration had collapsed for some days. The people were in control, but there was not a charge made even by the Government that a single person was injured or tortured in this mass upheaval. It just surprises me. But terrible vengeance was taken on the people of Ballia. When the masses react they cannot be judged by ordinary peace-time standards.

Q: What is going to be the Congress stand on the Muslim League's demand?

JN: Let the Muslim League say, precisely, what it desires. The Congress has fully agreed to the principle of self-determination to units. But division of India is injurious. Surely it is not merely a matter of detail to know where the division is to take place.

2. At the A.I.C.C. meeting on 7 August 1942, some amendments to the August Resolution were moved mostly by the Communists. They were either withdrawn or defeated after Jawaharlal and Mahatma Gandhi spoke. When the original resolution was put to vote only 13 Communists voted against it.

## 8. Call for Removal of Ban Orders<sup>1</sup>

I feel overwhelmed by the love and affection shown to me by such vast numbers of people. Yet, I realise that this is not for me, but rather for

1. Exclusive interview to the Associated Press of India, Lahore, 27 August 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 28 August 1945.

some vague symbol in their hearts with which they have associated me. To that symbol and to the cause of freedom let us all devote ourselves, forgetting our petty squabbles and rising above party and personal rivalry.

It is not enough to come to meetings and to shout slogans. Let them all become active workers and members of the Congress, form committees in every village and in every town, and carry the Congress message of freedom — a message of both political and economic freedom — to every home, both in the village and city.

Congress membership rolls should immediately be opened in all provinces, now that the ban against the Congress has been or is being removed. To the provincial governments, I would request that all remaining bans be removed on organisations or individuals and all prisoners, detenus and others, be released.

The Punjab is a splendid province full of vitality and generous impulses. Unfortunately, much of this vitality has gone into wrong channels. Let it now be diverted into the straight course of national freedom and unity, rising above sectarian and party differences. All of us who have the honour and privilege of being Indians must keep that honour bright and untarnished, thinking ever of the larger issues before the country and the world and working with all might and main for a proud and free India where the curse of poverty will cease to exist.

So we shall realise the dream of our hearts, and the bright vision that has so long led us on will be well within our grasp.

I should like to thank the people of Lahore for the magnificent demonstrations at the two public meetings yesterday and the day before. I do not remember having seen such a vast gathering at any previous meeting anywhere as on the night of August 25. In spite of the breakdown of microphone and loudspeakers and although it was dark, the huge crowd, numbering lakhs, behaved with exemplary patience. It is very easy for such a crowd to go out of hand or to be reduced into a state of complete disorder. Nevertheless, it maintained order generally and I shall long remember the final stages of this meeting when I addressed them directly at midnight. Yesterday's meeting held at four or five hours' notice again attracted about a hundred thousand people. Arrangements were perfect and the behaviour of this vast gathering was exemplary.

## 9. Parting Message to the Punjab<sup>1</sup>

With full faith in the people of the Punjab, I take leave of them but before I leave I must thank them for their exceeding love and generosity for me. The people of the Punjab afford magnificent material for the great task of the building up of a new India. I carry most vivid memories of my three-day visit to the Punjab. I pray that I may prove strong enough to bear the burden of the faith reposed in me and the love shown towards me.

1. *The Tribune*, 28 August 1945.

## 10. Capture Power for the Masses<sup>1</sup>

I have great love for the Jats of Meerut and Rohtak districts. They have been separated by artificial barriers. Among the agriculturists of the country, the Jats are the bravest people. Their contribution to India's history and tradition in martial strength is the greatest.

Many shameful things have been done in the name of war. Many Defence of India Rules were enforced, but nobody can say how these rules defended the country. Corruption, dishonesty and fraud flourished as never before and today nowhere in the world are corruption and bribery as rampant as in India. People were forced to contribute towards the various war funds. Police officers were employed to extort money from the people in the name of the war effort and a part of the money thus extorted never reached Government coffers, but remained in the pockets of those who collected it. In the name of enforcing controls, the police were given wide powers and the most tyrannical police rule was established over poor villagers.

I am glad that during the 1942 struggle the people took the challenge of the Government and never bowed down. Never in the history of India

1. Speech at Tekri Kalan in Haryana, 30 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 1 September and *The Hindu*, 1 September 1945.



after the Mutiny of 1857, had a whole people, from one end of the country to the other, revolted against a mighty and powerful Government, which had not only robbed them of their freedom, but tried to crush their spirit and urge for independence.

The atrocities committed on the people have no parallel in history. In my province and that of Bengal and Bihar people were not only machine-gunned and their houses set on fire, but many villages were razed to the ground. It is my wish to tour these places which bore the brunt of Government tyranny and do whatever I can to relieve their distress. I am so entangled in other work that I am unable to find time to visit these places.

The soldiers of the Indian National Army, many of whom have been captured by the Government and are kept in various jails and forts in India, are misguided soldiers, who tried to help a foreign government. But whatever they did was for the independence of the country. Their whole action was guided by purely patriotic motives. These soldiers will soon be tried by courts, but I warn the Government that if they are treated harshly, it will leave a lasting effect on the minds of Indians.

The only way to end the present exploitation of the people is to capture political power for the toiling masses. The Jats should join the Congress in order to solve their economic difficulties. They should banish fear of the foreign government completely from their minds. Jat women under the Swaraj government will have equal rights. I appeal to the people of Haryana solidly to vote for Congress candidates in the forthcoming elections. This may be my only election speech in this area as I may not be able to address you again on this question.

## 11. Towards Freedom<sup>1</sup>

I have every hope that India will be free within two or three years. If the Congress is weakened it will mean a setback to India's freedom movement. The Congress is engaged in a revolutionary movement for emancipation. After India achieves its goal, there may be no need for

1. Speech at Ferozepore, 18 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 19 November and *The Hindustan Times*, 21 November 1945.

the Congress to continue its existence as it will then have realised its objective. I have no doubt that the people of Ferozepore will stand by the Congress and its cause. They must meet with success in the election. The Congress has a slogan on which it appeals for support. It is the freedom of India.

The Quit India Resolution stands as it is, in spite of the demand for its withdrawal by some of the British politicians and even by Mr. Jinnah, who said that the release of the Congress Working Committee could be considered only after the August Resolution had been withdrawn. But here I stand before you after having been released from prison — and the August Resolution stands as before. The Congress has not obliged the Government.

Elections are being contested by the Congress not merely with the object of forming provincial governments, but also for deciding the issue as to who should be the rulers in Delhi — the people's own elected representatives or friends of the British bureaucracy. It is possible that the Congress might arrive at an agreement with the Government, but if the Government is not in a conciliatory mood for a political settlement, we shall be duty-bound to decide our course of action.

The Punjab Government has not changed during the last ten years. How the police ruled the province is known by the manner in which Khan Abdul Chaffar Khan was arrested and treated.

I regret that the Akalis cannot rise against the British since they are all the time engaged in the political game and go from one door to another, not sticking to any party, for negotiations. The religious rights of all communities will be protected. But no one will be allowed to hinder India's march to freedom. When the Congressmen were in jail, Akalis were opposing the Congress movement and abusing Gandhiji. The contest between Sardar Mangal Singh and Sardar Kapoor Singh has become a contest between the Punjab Government's representative and the Congress, since Sardar Baldev Singh, the Unionist Sikh Minister, is influencing voters through *tehsildars*, *patwaris* and other officials. The Sikhs are a great people, a most patriotic people. I hope they will not be misled and that they will support the Congress. India's economic, political and other problems have become so big that the British Government cannot solve them. We cannot face the new world until we have organised our strength.

India's united strength will save the I.N.A. men whatever might be the decision of the court.



## 12. On the Brink of a Mighty Revolution<sup>1</sup>

India is on the brink of a mighty revolution. The year 1946 seems pregnant with possibilities that none dare foretell today. Therefore, to vote for the Congress is to vote for the freedom that is coming soon. By your vote you have to declare whether you stand for freedom or slavery. The elections will decide the fate of the Red Fort and the Viceregal Lodge.

I ask you to vote for the Congress candidates for the Central Assembly — Sardar Kapoor Singh, Lala Thakur Das Bhargava and Raizada Hans Raj. The individuality of Congress candidates does not matter. They are simply standard-bearers of the Congress which has been fighting for independence for many years.

Those who try to go against the great gushing torrent of Indian nationalism will be swept ashore, lifeless as a log of wood.

To vote against the Congress in the coming central and provincial elections will amount to raising the hopes of the British Government whose end in India is near and inevitable. It has become plainer day by day that their hopes cannot thus be raised sufficiently to perpetuate their stranglehold on this country. On the canvas of world convulsions and revolutions and upheavals their trace is being obliterated.

The British Government knows that it is the Congress that is to be taken into account as the most powerful force arrayed throughout the land against it. It simply does not care for the communal organisations which are only an obstacle in the path of freedom.

The British Government wants the success of any non-Congress candidate, be he a Muslim Leaguer, an Akali Dal nominee, a Hindu Sabhaite or any other in the elections. It wants the success of these men against the Congress. It will be very happy over such a result as it is afraid only of the Congress. There are many civilians in the United Provinces and elsewhere, who have booked their passage to leave by the first boat, if Congress ministries stepped in.

I warn the officials against influencing the elections in favour of non-Congress candidates. It has been brought to my notice that several officials are openly asking voters to support the Akali candidate, Sardar Mangal Singh, who is opposing the Congress candidate. This is absurd

1. Speech at Lahore, 18 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 19 November and *The Hindustan Times*, 20 November 1945.



and most improper. Do not bend under official pressure. To be influenced by official interference in the elections will mean that you do not want freedom. You must vote fearlessly and freely for the Congress which has been struggling against the alien power.

In the Punjab one sees more of the British Government than in the rest of India. Here, even a Government peon puts on a peculiar appearance. Deputy Commissioners of this province are even more powerful, or think themselves to be so, than Governors in other provinces.

The Unionist Ministry merely mirrors the image of the British Government. All over India it is hard to find a parallel to this ministry. It is a matter of deep shame that this ministry has suppressed the people and humiliated the Punjab youth when the country was involved in a life-and-death struggle with the British power. And this feeling of shame becomes all the more unbearable when one thinks that all this happened under a popularly elected ministry. This state of affairs in the Punjab has to be ended, and the people can do so by voting for freedom, and not for bureaucracy and its henchmen.

It seems obvious that the Congress will emerge as the largest single party in the Punjab Legislature. It is another question whether it alone, without coalition with other elements, can form a government. The future will find an answer to this, but this much is certain that the face of the Punjab is going to be changed. In the march to freedom the Punjab will not lag behind.

The communal organisations, particularly the Muslim League and the Akali Dal which stand only for narrow sectarian interests, always put up conditions for participating in the struggle for independence. They only pay lip sympathy to freedom but have never suffered or made sacrifices.

The Congress can never be cowed down or threatened by communal organisations. It will not bow to the threats of even the British Government. We shall oppose the Muslim League everywhere and we will certainly defeat it. The League wants to achieve Pakistan with the help of the British. Mr. Jinnah's latest statement has amply exposed this bogey of Pakistan.

Some Sikh leaders are misleading the members of their community. When the Congress was engaged, for three years, in a great struggle against the British might, they had been busy bargaining for minor gains, sometimes with the Unionists, sometimes with the Muslim League, sometimes with the Commander-in-Chief. During this period they opposed the Congress in the Peshawar election and it was just right that they suffered defeat in this dirty attempt.

However, the Sikhs are a brave people. There are many Akalis who have fought shoulder to shoulder with the Congress in the fight for

liberty. The Sikhs will only be harming their own interests, if they let themselves go into communal channels. It is against the dignity and honour of the brave Sikhs to oppose the Congress and thus help the British Government. It is the Congress alone that will win freedom. All other organisations simply cannot attain this great and noble objective.

Time and again, it has been proved that the Congress can accept the challenge of British imperialism. For 25 years, it has grappled with this monster and heroically resisted it. Yet it still retains its hold on India. This hold is bound to go. The Congress will see to it. There is no second body in the land to do this. The time for knocking at the doors of the British Government is long past. We have to settle the issue of freedom ourselves by one more mighty and final effort. We wish the British well in their own island, but they must clear out from India.

You must keep in mind the big fundamental issues before the country and not be lost in the maze of trivial and unimportant things.

In the free India to come there will be no Hindu raj as Hindu Mahasabha dreams, nor a Muslim raj, nor a Sikh raj. It will be a people's raj—a raj of all, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others with power resting in the hands of the people as a whole. It will not be the raj of a handful few, for this will make no more difference than will the replacement of a few white officials. This raj will be a combined rule of all the elements that make India.

### 13. On the Sikh Problem<sup>1</sup>

The Sikh problem is an important matter which is part of the all-India question. The Punjab cannot be separated from India. I have studied thoroughly what happened in the past 25 years. India's temper is rising daily as it cannot sit idle. It cannot wait for the Government to fulfil its promise. I am afraid our patience might burst any time, overwhelming the Government into the abyss.

The League says that the Congress opposes Pakistan. The Akali Party says that the Congress has sanctioned Pakistan. Neither party says what it will do for India's freedom which is the only important

1. Speech at Moga, 18 November 1945. From *The Tribune*, 21 November 1945.



problem. You know what these parties have done during the last five years. Akalis say we will defend Sikh rights and will not let Pakistan be granted. They oppose Pakistan but they have negotiated with the League through the back door so many times.<sup>2</sup> They have sought the help of the British Government also.

Mr. Jinnah told the English press in an interview about a year and a half ago that the British Government should give Pakistan. Whatever their strength may be they cannot make Pakistan here even with the help of the British Government. This problem can only be solved by a compromise.

What Mr. Jinnah says even a child knows is quite impossible to realise. Every unit will enjoy full freedom while India will work unitedly. India will see so many changes in the coming years.

The official interference in the elections is highly objectionable and unwarranted. I appeal to the voters not to vote for any candidate under official pressure which means an insult to us. The country will not forgive those who want to influence free voting.

The Sikhs are a brave freedom-loving people. They should strengthen the hands of all progressive forces and work for freedom with the Congress which is the only national body that can fight for it, and make all possible sacrifices for it. The doors of the Congress are open to all. Anybody can join the Congress and strengthen it.

2. In November 1942, the Sikh leaders had held talks with Jinnah on the implications and consequences of the demand of Pakistan for the Sikhs in the Punjab.

#### 14. The Lahore Conspiracy Case Detenus<sup>1</sup>

The detention of the Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners after more than 15 years of prison life is an astonishing and significant indication of what the present administration stands for. To say that it is a blot on any administration is to put it feebly.

1. *The Hindustan Times*, 21 November 1945. Jawaharlal gave this interview to the press at Lahore on 20 November 1945 soon after he met in the Lahore central jail five political prisoners who had then spent more than 18 years in jail though an ordinary prisoner sentenced for life was released after undergoing 12 years sentence including remission.



For years all manner of attempts have been made by Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and many others to get them released. No favour was asked for because in the ordinary course they would have been released.

The late Punjab Premier gave definite assurances of their release and yet, in spite of all this, these men, who were young boys when they came to prison, are still there. I hope that the changes that are bound to come soon will put an end to this amazing instance of ineptitude on the part of the police and C.I.D.

### 15. On his Second Tour of the Punjab<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that the Congress with its all-India power and strength and mass response, as well as its programme for the future, is the only organisation which can find answers to our problems and lead India to freedom.

If this is so, and I believe it, it becomes essential for every thinking person and voter to vote for and help the Congress in the elections.

I have only spent two days touring about in the Punjab, but these two days have been very full. I am exceedingly sorry that the third day's programme had to be given up. I have a fair capacity for work but the programmes that were drawn up were beyond that capacity and indeed it was hardly possible to fit them anyhow within the normal day. I hope the persons who were put out and disappointed by the change in my programme will forgive me. I had to choose between husbanding my physical resources and a possible complete collapse of my voice.

After only two days of campaigning it is not right for me to speak for the whole of the Punjab, but wherever I went I had the impression of a great mass response to the message of the Congress. I addressed very big gatherings and I shall long remember the last of these at Nankana Sahib.

Although I came for the elections, I was concerned with vaster issues and mostly I spoke about them connecting the elections with them. For obviously these elections will affect the future.

1. Interview to the press, Lahore, 20 November 1945. From *The Tribune*, 21 November 1945.

I hope that my words will make the people of the Punjab think of these issues and make them realise that the small conflicts of the day are utterly unimportant before these vital matters that count today and will count tomorrow still more.

I appeal to the Punjabis not to be influenced or coerced by official pressure during the elections. I realise that in the Punjab the Congress has to meet the challenge of enormous resources of the other side, as well as the official hierarchy. But I am confident that the people will be swayed neither by money considerations nor official pressure.

#### **16. Planned Visit to the North West Frontier Province<sup>1</sup>**

The Frontier has always attracted me because of its robust men and women and its love of Indian freedom and nationalism. The leaders of the Frontier are well capable of dealing with the situation they face and I am convinced that the Congress will triumph there in the elections.

I shall go there probably early next year, not so much because I think that the election requires my presence, but because I like meeting our comrades of the Frontier and drawing inspiration from their courage and discipline in the cause of Indian freedom.

In the Central Assembly election that is taking place soon, I have no doubt that the Congress candidate, Khan Abdul Ghani Khan, will win easily. Obviously, he must not only win but win with a large plurality of votes. I hope, therefore, that the voters will bestir themselves and help him in every way.

1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 20 November 1945. *The Tribune*, 21 November 1945.

#### **17. Message for Punjab Voters<sup>1</sup>**

I appeal to all the voters in the coming elections, whether they are Hindu, Muslim or Sikh or Christian, or whether they belong to any

1. Allahabad, 29 December 1945. *National Herald*, 31 December 1945.



special constituency, to vote for the Congress candidates set up by the Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress. We ask for their votes for no personal reasons but for the great cause of India's freedom which the Congress has represented for so long and for which so many have suffered during these many years. All those who stand for independence must inevitably vote for the Congress candidates. For the independence of India not only means the freedom of the whole country but the freedom of each part and group in it to develop along their own lines and according to their genius. There is no freedom for any group or part unless the whole is free. In free India, every citizen, man or woman, must have equal rights and equal liberties. It is for this ideal that the Congress stands and asks for public support. We are on the verge of great happenings and big changes and we cannot waste our energies at this critical moment in following smaller objectives or any personal preference. Therefore, I trust that all voters in the Punjab will vote for the Congress candidates, thus voting for the independence of India.

### 18. The Message of Swaraj<sup>1</sup>

I have come to convey to you the message of Swaraj and what it means. There is a psychological revolution in the country as a result of the Congress struggle for freedom. The fundamental problem of the people is their grinding poverty. It is absurd to talk of Hindu raj or Muslim raj. Even British imperialism will not be able to oppress you for long in the fast changing world.

One of the achievements of the Congress is that it has united the whole country in a common bond of sacrifice, despite the diversity of languages and other differences. The communal organisations are trying to sidetrack the main issue and are thus serving the purpose of British imperialism. By voting for the Congress, you demonstrate to the whole world that you are on the side of the forces fighting for freedom. People cannot remain neutral in this fight. They have to rally on one side or the other. We want strong men with strong nerves who will never bend before anyone.

1. Address to ex-servicemen, Sikri, 21 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 January 1946.



## 19. The End of the Raj<sup>1</sup>

The British raj in India is going to end and big changes are impending. The election provides a test for the people to decide as to whether they are on the side of freedom or not. It is not a personal question so far as the Congress candidates are concerned. Swaraj is bound to come very soon. It might take two years or three years. I cannot fix a date. But one thing I want to make clear. Swaraj does not mean the replacement of British officers by Indian officers. True Swaraj implies the transfer of power to the representatives of the people. It would make little difference in itself if an Indian occupies the Viceroy's House in the place of a Briton.

The Congress is the only organisation that has fought against Britain for the freedom of India. I am proud of the manner in which the Congress has waged this fight. The Congress is not interested in minor issues. It is the panchayat of the people and to vote for the Congress is to vote for the self-respect and freedom of the 400 million people of India. The communal organisations — the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League — cannot play this role. I appeal to the people to vote for the Congress candidates.

1. Speech at Ballabhgarh, 21 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 January 1946.

## 20. The Larger Perspective<sup>1</sup>

Though the Jats are slow to think and take decisions, they have the will and the determination to carry out the decisions once they are made. I am interested in the people of this area for the reason that they have a martial tradition and are the backbone of the Indian Army.

1. Speech at Sonapat, 22 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 24 January 1946.

I am glad that recent events have compelled the members of the armed forces to realise that their place is with the rest of their countrymen. It is a pity that the Indian soldiers are still forced to do things which are against India's interests.

I want the people of Haryana to study their local problems in a larger perspective. The present Government is utterly incompetent to solve the problem of rehabilitation of demobilised soldiers or any other major problems of India. It only knows how to oppress people and extort taxes. Instead of making any bold attempt to end either poverty or unemployment the bureaucracy encourages corruption and black marketeering.

The August upheaval is the biggest mass upsurge in India after 1857. The kisans of the U.P., Bihar, Maharashtra and Bengal suffered terribly as a result of Government repression during that struggle. The Government has, however, miserably failed to crush the spirit of freedom which inspired the August revolt.

There is unrest throughout Asia. The peoples of Asia are struggling to free themselves from the clutches of western imperialism. Against this background of general revolt it will be impossible for the British Government to keep the Indian people under its rule for long.

I am satisfied with the outcome of the first I.N.A. case, which I think is a victory for the people who have unanimously demanded the officers' release. For the first time, the voice of the people penetrated through the thick walls of the Red Fort.

The Unionist Party is a spurious organisation, not in the least interested in India's freedom. I remind you that the Congress is pledged to a policy of non-interference in religious and cultural matters. Rich people are trying to sidetrack the main economic issue by raising false communal slogans. The Congress functions in a democratic fashion. I do not personally like some of the decisions of the Congress, but once the Congress takes a decision, I consider it my duty to devote my entire energy in implementing that decision.

## 21. History in the Making<sup>1</sup>

The very name of this place is fascinating for it has rich historical associations. It was at Panipat that India's fate had been decided several

1. Speech at Panipat, 22 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 24 January 1946.

times. It was in the plains of Panipat and Kurukshetra that the epic battle of Mahabharata was fought and the three battles of Panipat dictated the pattern of India's history for centuries to come. Now that history is in the making again, it is necessary that the people of this area should make a contribution worthy of their historic past.

I am fed up with mere slogans. I sometimes wonder whether people flock to these meetings as to a *tamasha*. Crowds do not matter. What matters is whether we are ready to die for India's freedom. The Congress is an embodiment of the aspirations and sentiments of the people. It is a powerful organisation of the masses. Gandhiji and a handful of leaders are not the Congress. The people must prove themselves worthy of their glorious past. The Congress has given you the lead and you must strengthen the Congress.

I am optimistic about India's future. The Congress has emerged stronger from the life and death struggle it had to face in August 1942 and there is a more intense desire for freedom in the country than ever before.

The Congress follows the policy of nonviolence. You cannot make a revolution by mere catchwords. In an age of ever more destructive weapons you can fight an alien government only with aeroplanes and tanks. You can only fight with modern weapons. You cannot fight with lathis and a few guns and revolvers. India has no modern weapons.

## 22. Time For India to be Free<sup>1</sup>

The time has come for the final decision about India's freedom and the ending of colonialism and imperialism in Asia. Delay now is fraught with grave consequences for England, India, Asia and the world.

Other countries in the world celebrate their independence day as an achievement of liberation, but to Indians the day means a day of determination and affirmation of the call of independence not only for India but of the rest of the world.

1. Independence Day message read at a meeting in London on 26 January 1946.  
From *The Tribune*, 28 January 1946.



It is in the interest of world peace that India attains its independence through a constitutional convention rather than through a revolution.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the United Nations Organisation to see to it that Britain does not continue to exploit India's internal dissensions and hold them as an excuse to postpone the constitutional convention. It is a challenge to constructive statesmanship not only in India and Britain, but also in the sessions of the United Nations.

### 23. No Going Back<sup>1</sup>

We are engrossed with elections today, but let us not forget the deeper and basic things. Six years of the war have changed the face of the world, and the war and our three years of heroic struggle against imperialism have changed India. New storms are blowing and nobody can say where they would carry our boat. But even through these uncertainties, this is definite that after 8 August 1942 we have taken out our boat from the safety of the harbour into the open sea and there is to be no going back now. Even if some want to tarry for a while there is no way. We must move on. Events compel us. The episode of the alien British rule is about to end, and a new chapter is going to begin. We have still to achieve our independence and we may have it at an early date, only if we grasp it firmly. The more difficult task is to build the India of our dreams and aspirations, in which every Indian is an equal and where poverty and unemployment are unknown. Possibly, 1946 is going to be a year of big and fateful decisions for us. We have to win the elections, but more important trials may follow. We have to hold ourselves in readiness for them.

1. Message to the *Pratap* printed in the *National Herald*, 26 January 1946.

## DELHI

### 1. On the Popularity of the Congress<sup>1</sup>

The Congress has never been so popular since 1921 as now. In the last three years, the Congress is more strongly entrenched in the hearts of the people. There is a huge reservoir of goodwill for the Congress among the people. We should harness this goodwill and the immense popular enthusiasm for the Congress for the good of the country.

I am absolutely confident of the Congress sweeping the polls. We have not yet considered the question whether we should contest the elections. My personal opinion is that the Congress should contest these elections as a constituent assembly might be formed on the basis of the results of the elections.

We have, however, to see whether a constituent assembly based on the results of the elections would be a truly representative body. We should not, therefore, attach undue importance to elections. Our approach to every such question should be in terms of complete independence for India.

Though the strength of the Congress has grown, the elements opposed to it have also gathered strength. I am not unduly dismayed by the communal question. While I do not underrate its importance, I am against attaching too much importance to it.

After touring the Punjab, I am struck by the Punjabi's great vitality. If the Punjabi's enthusiasm can be properly harnessed, I am sure they can do wonders.

The Communists have differences with the Congress on fundamentals. There is, therefore, no question of their being allowed to join executive bodies of the Congress. No group or body of people who did not subscribe to the Congress policy of the last three years have had any place in the Congress.

I am against members of the executive bodies of the Congress seeking election to the Central and provincial legislatures.

1. Address to Congress workers, Delhi, 28 August 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 29 August 1945.

## 2. Danger of Pakistan Mentality<sup>1</sup>

To think in terms of Pakistan when the modern trend is towards the establishment of a world federation is like thinking in terms of bows and arrows as weapons of war in the age of the atom bomb. The whole mentality behind this conception of bows and arrows and Pakistan is most dangerous and if we cling to such anachronisms, we shall never solve our problems.

As in the case of the bow-and-arrow mentality, I cannot appreciate the mentality behind the demand for Pakistan. If a large body of people take it into their heads to divide the country, they cannot change the trend of the world, which is moving in a different direction. Such people will only drag the country and their community into an abyss.

In his latest statement on the right of self-determination for territorial units, Maulana Azad has not laid down any new principle of policy. What he has stated is embodied in Congress resolutions. The Congress has made its position clear that if any part of India wants to break away nobody can stop it forcibly. The Congress has been working during the last 60 years for the establishment of a strong independent state in India. All sections of people in the country are bound by historical associations and traditions. It is absurd to talk of balkanising the country in the age of the atom bomb. On the other hand, they should aim at establishing a federation of India with the neighbouring countries stretching from Iran to Siam.

No sensible person can think of coercing a large group into joining a union to which it cannot owe allegiance voluntarily. Such disruptionist elements will be a source of weakness rather than strength to any state and will sabotage any large-scale planning. They have to tackle the gigantic problems of poverty and unemployment and it is, therefore, all the more necessary that the state should be strong.

As we are opposed to coercing people into joining a union, we cannot coerce large minorities in the Punjab and Bengal into joining a state to which they cannot owe allegiance. It will be understandable if the demand is for the establishment of Pakistan in the North West Frontier Province or in Kashmir State where the Muslims are in a preponderant majority. The Punjab and Bengal are distinct cultural units

1. Speech at Delhi, 29 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 30 August and *The Tribune*, 30 August 1945.



and even the protagonists of Pakistan are not inclined to accept the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. There are thus practical difficulties in working out the right of self-determination.

The Muslim League's reticence on the question of the division of the Punjab and Bengal has convinced me that the League is not prepared to face the problem and is only interested in keeping up the quarrel.

A fear complex is behind the demand for Pakistan. No paper safeguards can give a complete guarantee of security to any minority. It is the inherent strength of any minority that can assure its future. The Sikhs are a very small minority, but that brave community has never worried too much about safeguards. There is no escape from unity from whatever angle the question is examined.

The war has ended, but there are still many conflicts to be resolved. The atom bomb, which has finished the war suddenly, is an indication of what the next war will be like. If two bombs can kill or injure 5,00,000 people, cities like Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay can be obliterated overnight.

I learnt in Ahmadnagar Fort of the happenings in Delhi during those fateful days of the August struggle. I am prepared to take all responsibility for what happened in those days, as I am one of those who helped in creating the psychological conditions for a mass movement.

It is true that the movement was not started by any Congress declaration but when all the leaders were arrested overnight, the masses could not tolerate it. The people took it to be an attack on the independence of the country. They had only two alternatives, either to submit to the Government or to take up the challenge. I am glad and proud of the movement which followed.

It is only proper that we should resist any attempt to curb our country's urge for freedom. If we had taken it lying down, we would have proved ourselves a demoralized people. We should always be ready to resist all such attempts to break our spirit. We should not judge the actions of those who participated in the August uprising in a legalistic manner. One of the lessons of history is that when a people raised the banner of revolt against an alien government, they cannot be expected to act within the framework of the law made by that government.

The Congress has not yet decided to fight the elections to the provincial and Central legislatures, but I think that at its next meeting the Congress will decide to fight the elections as it did in 1936. We shall plunge into the election arena with all our strength and sweep the polls. Like the communal organisations, we are not worried about ministry-making. Congressmen should stand united and speak with

one voice. In this manner alone can we make our full strength felt. I am not afraid of a conflict with communal organisations in the elections, although the Congress has done nothing to invite it.

As the ban on the Congress in Delhi has been removed the people of the city should join the national organisation in hundreds of thousands. Delhi Congressmen should start enrolment of primary members in the province immediately. I appeal to you to contribute liberally towards the political sufferers relief fund which is meant for the relief of the families of the political prisoners who participated in the Congress movement.

### 3. Congress to Contest with Full Strength<sup>1</sup>

Question: What is the Congress attitude to the elections?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress attitude to elections is not the same as that held by others. Elections by themselves might be important, but they have to be taken in their particular context. I cannot say what seats the Congress will contest, but if the Congress decides to contest the elections, it will do so in full force on a platform of Indian independence. I repudiate the report that the Congress would not contest any Muslim seat. That is not the Congress attitude.

Q: Would you explain your recent statement that men holding executive positions in the Congress should not normally be candidates in these elections?

JN: What I meant was that elections are a disturbing factor and should not be allowed to interfere with normal Congress work. The Congress executive should concern itself with Congress work and leave elections to separate election boards. For this purpose I feel that office-bearers of the Congress should not normally stand for election, but I have made it clear that in special cases permission can be given.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 29 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 30 August, *The Statesman*, 30 August and *The Hindu*, 31 August 1945.



Q: What would be the Congress assurances in the elections?

JN: The Congress position has already been made clear. The election programme will deal with political, economic, national and international problems. In the political field, our demand is for complete independence. Our attitude to international questions has been fully set down in the Congress resolution of August 1942. As regards economic policies there are a number of resolutions on the subject. The Congress is largely a peasant organisation in rural areas. Though its leadership comes from the middle classes, 80 per cent of Congressmen are peasants. There is general agreement that the present land tenure system should go. As regards industries the general view is that heavy and key industries should be controlled and owned by the state. It makes all the difference what you mean by the state. We are thinking of a democratically controlled state machinery, not a British-controlled state as it is now. Smaller industries might be left to private enterprise. On the question of planning, there must be a measure of state control, not day-to-day control, because that leads to complications, nepotism, corruption and so on.

Q: May I draw your attention to the resolution of the Bombay Provincial Muslim Congress opposing the formation of ministries in the provinces?

JN: The question of Congress assuming power in the provinces has not arisen. When it arises, I do not think the decision will affect us much. We decide what is best under the circumstances.

Q: Would you further elucidate your recent observation about the Congress attitude to the Communists?

JN: The Working Committee will consider the position of the Communist Party *vis-a-vis* the Congress. All this time the Congress has been a mixture of two elements. It is a movement and it is a party working in legislatures and elsewhere. Naturally, when there is some kind of a movement involved, men must go only in one direction, and difficulty arises when this action is opposed. One does not exclude a Communist as Communist, but as one who does not agree with the Congress policy. Our attitude to Indian Communists has nothing to do with communism or the Soviet State. It is essentially a question of internal politics. Difficulties have arisen because of differences of opinion between the Congress and Indian Communists. It is only right



that the Congress executives should consist of persons who agree with the Congress policy. I feel, therefore, that it will not be right to have Communists in the Congress executives if they differ with its policies.

Q: Would you clarify the Congress position on the issue of self-determination?

JN: The Congress position is and has been that India should retain national unity, but with large autonomous powers for the federating units. We have, however, made it clear that if any territorial unit wants to separate by a vote of its inhabitants, we are not going to compel it to stay in the federation provided it does not compel any other unit or units which do not want separation or self-determination.

My personal views on the question are different. It does not matter whether India is one nation or more than two nations. There is hardly any satisfactory definition of a nation. It can be argued from historical, cultural, racial and a hundred other angles. If hundred nations want to pull together, then they are one nation. If a particular community or group does not want to pull together with the rest of the country, then it does not matter whether it is one nation or two nations. I call it an alien element in the country. It cannot be absorbed and you cannot digest it. Some way has to be found to suit both parts.

Look at this whole theory of two nations. The theory is supposed to be based on religion. That is what I cannot understand in the modern context of the world. I have heard that it existed in the Middle Ages. Two nations of India based on religion are interlocked in every village. It will be a terribly difficult job to transfer population. There will be a tremendous upheaval. Suppose a division of India takes place on the basis of the two-nation theory. Obviously, in one part of the country, there will be tens of millions of people owing allegiance, according to this two-nation theory, to another part of the country, where one-tenth of the population will owe allegiance to the first part. We are not thinking of territorial loyalties here but religious loyalties. According to this theory, the Hindus in the Muslim parts will be aliens and Muslims in Hindu parts will be aliens. If you accept this theory, all manner of difficulties are bound to arise. Aliens cannot be wholly incorporated in a state and in case of war they would become very dangerous.

Q: Would you further elucidate the Congress President's statement on self-determination?

JN: The Congress President's statement correctly represents the Congress position. It recognises the right of separation or self-determination, though the Congress feels that it will be a reversal of the process of history to cut up India. It would be injurious to the defence and development of the country. It is our hope, however, that once the freedom for separation is recognised the urge for separation will disappear.

Q: Your views on the atomic bomb...

JN: I have a scientist's outlook. Long ago I took a degree in science and studied physics before the present invention of the atom. I am fascinated by the theory that almost anything can be made radio-active. In the spare moments of a politician's life, I have tried to study science and am greatly interested in the atomic bomb. The invention has released tremendous forces in the world, which can be used for good or evil. For the time being, it has been used only to destroy cities and kill people.

There is now a race in the world between the forces of construction and destruction. Since the last generation this race has become more and more frantic and with the coming of the atomic bomb, it looks as though one of them must win. Which would win, I cannot say. I am not interested in the destruction of men in the world, but there is no good making a fuss about it. The atomic bomb cannot be kept a secret for long and, in fact, most of the advanced countries are on the verge of making it. Undoubtedly, they will have it and use it if the war comes again. That means tremendous destruction.

From a humanitarian's point of view I would inquire into the basic cause. It is a very grave responsibility for any country that uses atom bombs. A very great responsibility rests with the United States. It justifies the use of the atomic bomb on the ground that it stopped war, but by unleashing such a weapon it has created a dangerous situation.

The atomic bomb brings a measure of hope also. Faced with such a destructive weapon people might wake up.

Q: Would the future Government of India have atomic bombs in their armoury?

JN: So long as the world is constituted as it is, every country will have to devise and use the latest scientific methods for its protection. I have no doubt India will develop its scientific researches and hope Indian scientists will use the atomic force for constructive purposes. But if India is threatened, it will inevitably try to defend itself by all means at



its disposal. I hope India, in common with other countries, will prevent atomic bombs being used.

Q: (By an American journalist): Would you clarify your attitude to Subhas Bose who is not probably dead but alive in Saigon? Bose should be treated as a war criminal because his men fought and killed many Americans and he extorted money from the poor in Burma and Malaya.

JN: I resent the suggestion that Subhas Bose should be dealt with as a war criminal. Were he—in the event of his still being alive—to be tried as a war criminal, I would wish all persons considered war criminals to be brought to trial so that facts might come out.

It should not be a trial by British and American judges alone. There should be Indian judges also. It should be an impartial trial conducted against an Indian background. And in my list there will be many high officials sitting in Delhi who are bigger war criminals than Subhas Bose. That list will be very different.

I have known Subhas for over 20 years. He was once President of the Congress. A most unusual thing happened and an ex-President of the Congress was turned out of the organisation. That was before the war. He also formed a party against the Congress. Then came the war. He escaped from India, went to Germany and then to Japan. So far as I know, the Indian National Army had already been formed even before Bose went to Japan. I do not find anything unusual for a supposed legal government to levy taxes.<sup>2</sup>

As for extortion there has been enough in India. Free gifts were collected for war funds and millions had been extorted. Three million people had died of starvation in Bengal. As for Bose, I have never doubted his passion for freedom. Bose had no love for the Japanese but he was foolish to imagine that he could further Indian independence by allying himself with the Japanese and Germans who were not only aggressive powers, but dangerous powers.

Q: What are your views on the recent Chinese-Soviet Pact?<sup>3</sup>

2. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind with Subhas Bose as the Head of State was formed on 21 October 1943. In a few days, Burma, Germany, the Chinese National Government of Manchukuo, Italy and Thailand had extended their recognition to the Provisional Government.
3. The treaty between China and the Soviet Union provided for collaboration between the two countries to prevent a repetition of Japanese aggression.



JN: Any pact promoting goodwill is good. India is anxious to have the closest friendly relations with both the countries.

#### 4. Subjection the Greatest Calamity<sup>1</sup>

Political subjection is the greatest calamity that can befall a country. The Congress is the only organisation that struggles hard to make India free. The idea of begging votes is distasteful to me, but I will ask, for whom else can one vote except the Congress that stands for freedom and for economic and social justice?

The trial of the three INA officers will be of historical importance, not only because three brave young men are involved in it, but also because intricate questions of international law are involved.<sup>2</sup> It is not merely a question of legal defence. There is the fundamental question of the love of freedom, which has created affection among millions of peoples for these young men. Thousands of men and women members of the Indian National Army fought for freedom. As a member of the Defence Committee, I cannot enter into a discussion of the legal aspect of these cases. It is after many years that I am appearing in a case as a lawyer. I do not know how far I fit in this position. Broadly speaking, it is not merely a trial involving legal issues. It is something more than that. It touches the sentiments of the whole nation. The motive of the I.N.A. was freedom of India and to that end it reflected the sentiments and aspirations of 400 millions in the country.

Crores of people have expressed their opinion on this question. There has not been even a single discordant note anywhere. Of course, the Congress has given a lead in the matter, but the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Unionist Party and the Akali Dal have also raised their voice in support of the I.N.A. Whatever the legal arguments, the fundamental question remains that there is a higher tribunal than the

1. Speech at Delhi, 3 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 4 November, *The Leader*, 4 November and *The Tribune*, 6 November 1945.
2. Bhulabhai Desai argued that every nation had the right to be free and, if under foreign domination, had the right to make every legitimate effort to achieve freedom. He also claimed that violence was a legitimate means for the purpose.

court that will try these officers. Their tribunal is the bar of public opinion. The people of India should be the final court and arbiter of the case.

I emphasise the necessity of maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the country while this trial lasts. I strongly disapprove of the idea of holding a demonstration in front of the Red Fort on November 5 when the trial starts. I warn the sponsors of the move that issues of a far-reaching character are involved and that where the question of the lives of young men is to be decided, it will be highly improper to hold a demonstration. The I.N.A. Defence Committee will do its best to secure their release. I would have no objection to people holding meetings elsewhere in the city, but they should not attempt to have any demonstration in front of the Red Fort.

With feeling I refer to the death of Shrimati Satyavati. Her image is before my eyes. I had despaired of her life, when I saw her in the hospital. I want the people of Delhi to erect a befitting memorial in her honour. I am not in favour of a memorial of stone. I am in favour of earmarking a good amount out of the purse presented to me for Shrimati Satyavati's memorial. The rest of the money I want to be devoted to the I.N.A. defence fund and the Congress election fund in the North West Frontier Province.

Certain questions have been addressed to me by the Hindu Students' Federation. A scurrilous attack has been made on Mr. and Mrs. Asaf Ali in a local Urdu paper. It is sheer impudence to make a personal attack on Mrs. Asaf Ali, whose bravery is a matter of pride for all our countrymen.

Charges of suppression of the Muslim minority are utterly untrue.<sup>3</sup> If I were a Muslim I would be ashamed of the idea that 90 million Muslims could be suppressed. It is a false scare. Those who may be afraid of the alleged majority tyranny can take a lesson from the Sikhs. They are hardly four millions in the 400 millions. They have no apprehensions whatsoever and are fearless. Even if one wants to oppress a big minority, such as the Muslims, he will get more trouble than any gain out of it.

The Congress has made its position abundantly clear. I do not complain against the League for demanding Pakistan. My complaint is that they do not clarify the issue of Pakistan, despite our repeated demands. They are demanding the establishment of Pakistan even in the provinces where the Muslims are not in a majority. They do not

3. The *Dawn* at this time revived the charges of communal atrocities against the Congress ministries of 1937-39.



say anything about a plebiscite. Such questions can only be decided by a free India. The Congress, as the most powerful organisation in the country, can only indicate the way the solution of such a question lies. Those who think in terms of Pakistan think in terms of the existence of the third party. Once we are clear in our mind that our destiny lies in our own hands, no power can impose a solution on us and such difficulties will disappear.

We don't want to fight our countrymen, but we do want to fight for the freedom of the country. At a most critical phase in the history of the country, the Muslim League, the Communists and the rest sided with the rulers and did their worst to crush the legitimate struggle for freedom.

Where were these parties, who seek the electorate's confidence today, in 1942 and after? For three years and more, the Muslim League bargained with the British Government at the expense of the freedom of India. They now ask for Pakistan. I have no complaint against the demand, but the ambiguity in which Pakistan is wrapped up and the fantastic claims made thereunder make it absolutely futile even to discuss the question. The future of India can only be decided by those who will break her shackles of slavery. The claims of the Muslim League and those of the Hindu Mahasabha, which we openly discuss today, will not exist in a free India. The yardstick to measure the *bona fides* of the political parties is to find out their contribution to the common struggle for freedom. The League, the Mahasabha and the Communists betrayed the cause of freedom. There is no question of holding down and forcing the people of a province to a general scheme. If the people of a territory want to keep out, they may do so. But the conception of Pakistan, as preached today, is not only dangerous to the unity of India, but it is dangerous to the Muslims themselves. Despite the provincial and linguistic differences in the country, there always exists a fundamental unity in India which dates back to thousands of years.

Great tasks lie ahead. The main task is the achievement of freedom. Economic and social reconstruction should be undertaken. It is a big task to provide employment for two million Indians, who will be demobbed from the army. Whatever might be their reason for joining the armed forces, they belong to this country. They have no separate existence apart from the people of the land. The training the two million men have received is an asset to the country. They should be looked after and their talents channelised for the progress of the country. It is a great task which only a truly Indian Government can undertake. I refer to the resolution passed on this subject by the



A.I.C.C.<sup>4</sup> The problem of finding employment for lakhs of demobilised soldiers and other questions of reconstruction can only be tackled when we are a united people.

The proposal of parity<sup>5</sup> was made for an interim solution. No democratic solution can work, which is not based on the principle of one man, one vote. We cannot make two equal to one. I do not think in terms of separate electorates in a free India. I am prepared to devise effective safeguards to ensure that the majority do not impose their will on the minority. We, in the Congress, do not select people because they belong to any religion, but because they are fit for a certain job. The Indian National Army has completely solved the communal problem.

I plead for framing policies in the light of objective conditions in the country. I emphasise the necessity of a peaceful solution of our internal difficulties so that we may not face the difficulties China is facing. When the people capture power, they will not quarrel among themselves.

4. On 24 September 1945, the Congress Working Committee recommended that demobilised soldiers and workers released from war should be resettled so as to fit in with other schemes of national development.
5. A formula of parity between "caste" Hindus and Muslims was suggested by Wavell for the reconstitution of the Viceroy's Executive Council and on this basis the Simla Conference was convened.

## THE UNITED PROVINCES

### 1. Errors In the Electoral Rolls<sup>1</sup>

Question: What is your comment on the reports that the Government intends to base the forthcoming general elections to the provincial legislatures on the old electoral rolls prepared in 1942 and, in the case of the Central Assembly, on rolls just prepared under

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 2 September 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 3 September 1945.

circumstances in which there is little possibility of their being accurate and exhaustive?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Travelling down to Allahabad from the north, I heard complaints everywhere about the electoral rolls both of the Central and the Provincial Assemblies. A large number of people brought instances to my notice of the partly bogus character of these rolls. Where, on the face of it, there should be a large number of voters, only an insignificant few have been included in the list. This is particularly noticeable in the rolls for Delhi. I am told that only a handful of women in New Delhi are included in the voting registers.

It is rather absurd to hold elections on electoral rolls which are full of errors, omissions and bogus entries. And yet, I am told that no changes can be made in them now. It is obvious that so far as Congressmen are concerned, they have been either in prison or engaged in more important activities during the last three years to think of electoral rolls. They had no chance or opportunity to try to correct the rolls; when this chance has now come their way, it is denied to them.

Other groups and parties, who have no other function but to think of elections, of course, are always busy with this work. But parties and slogans apart, it is obviously necessary that if elections are held, they should be held on correct and up-to-date rolls, and the fullest civil liberty should prevail to enable people to be approached at the time of elections. Now the election registers are thoroughly bad and there are still many restrictions in many places on freedom of speech and meeting. A large number of Congressmen are still in prison. All this is a curious approach to the elections.

Q: Would the Congress Working Committee consider at its forthcoming meeting the question of forming ministries in the provinces before the general election?

JN: Every question will be discussed.

Q: Does the decision of the Bihar Governor to dissolve the legislature imply that the Government does not want ministries before the general election?

JN: That is possible, but I do not want to say much on the point as I have not given thought to it.

## 2. Congress Candidates for Muslim Seats<sup>1</sup>

We are not interested in electioneering work till the final decision is made by the Congress Working Committee or the All-India Congress Committee. When this decision is made, and if it is in favour of contesting elections, we shall certainly do so with all our strength and contest both general and Muslim seats. In regard to the Muslim seats we shall probably have candidates on the straight Congress ticket as well as candidates run in cooperation between the Congress and allied organisations. There is going to be no secrecy about our activities of work. It is entirely wrong for any Congressman or other person to imagine that in the so-called Muslim minority provinces the Congress is not going to run Muslim candidates. But this question of elections, as I have said, depends on the larger issue before the country, which the British Government may put.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 8 September 1945. *The Leader*, 9 September 1945. Jawaharlal issued this statement in response to a suggestion that the Congress should not contest Muslim seats but should enable Nationalist Muslims to contest the Muslim League for these seats.

## 3. Call for Sacrifices<sup>1</sup>

I recall the events of 1942 and congratulate the youth of the country on the prominent part played by them.

The road to freedom is strewn with insurmountable obstacles and happy would be the day when our efforts will be crowned with success. I warn you that although the nation has ungrudgingly given tremendous sacrifices for achieving freedom it may have to give many more, and it should be fully prepared. The present world is agog with scientific inventions like the atomic bomb. It is an era of transition and nobody

1. Speech at Lucknow, 9 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 10 September, *The Hindustan Times*, 10 September and *The Hindu*, 12 September 1945.



knows what may happen. There is turmoil everywhere. Grave issues face the word. But in India what we have aimed to achieve has not been achieved. We want to free India. We want to create a new India. During the last 100 years, India has been faced with scores of difficult problems, which have been solved in one way or the other, although the solution has been slow. Alien influences always retard our progress and make solution of pressing problems difficult.

The day has come when all our demands have burst forth. The formation of a new constituent assembly for India will not meet the legitimate demands of the nation. The arrested growth of the Indian people cannot be further arrested. The British Government, the present Government of India and the Indian Civil Service cannot solve our difficulties. The crux of the matter is that the Indian Government, as at present constituted, is unable to appreciate our genuine aspirations for freedom and advancement. They little realise that national problems are far bigger issues than the minor day-to-day routine.

The Government functioning in India comprises both competent and incompetent officers. Some of them, who believe in the creed of shooting, have practised this art well and have made good progress.

The Central and Provincial Governments have been encouraging corruption, nepotism, jobbery and black marketing. The Government encourages such persons who are after titles and attractive salaries. In the last two years the moral structure of the Government has crashed.

The Congress point of view of a national government is that it should be representative of all communities, who should work together for the common good of the country when Swaraj dawns on India. We should be able to face our problems boldly and squarely. The times are delicate and we shall have to oppose any settlement imposed on us by the British Government, and not acceptable to us.

The Congress has still to decide whether it should fight the elections or not. I would ask the U.P. Congress Committee and the district Congress committees not to start preparations for elections till the Congress Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee have given their decision on this question.

If we decided to contest the elections, we shall come fully prepared and smash anybody who opposes us. We will not be concerned with one seat here and one seat there. We cannot compromise on our fundamentals. The Congress knows how to fight. We have fought the British Government which claimed to have crushed us. The Congress is, however, still alive and has survived the all-powerful British Government's challenge. The reason is that it has the backing of the Indian people.

I appeal to you to strengthen our organisation and unity. I make a special appeal to student organisations to give up their party differences and desire for offices, and merge themselves into one fighting unit. Students are the torch-bearers of the nation and its future leaders.

I thank the public of Lucknow for offering me a rousing reception. I am fully conscious of the heavy debt I owe to the Indian people in terms of their affection and gratitude.

#### 4. Congress Strengthened by the 1942 Struggle<sup>1</sup>

During the last three years tremendous and far-reaching changes have taken place in our country. Three years ago the mighty Government unleashed its worst repression. After clapping the leaders in jail they launched raids against unarmed, innocent and nonviolent people to suppress and crush them decisively and completely. Word went round from New Delhi to London that the Congress had been crushed, was dead and was buried deep beyond resurrection. But the world witnessed a most glorious and wonderful sight in history. The nation, instead of taking the Government's challenge meekly, accepted it bravely and gave a stunning, crushing and befitting reply. Had there been no 1942 movement in India, it would have conclusively proved that India is a land of 40 crores of corpses and does not possess any manhood, but today we stand with our heads and spirit high as undefeated and unconquered people.

As a result of the 1942 struggle the Congress is far stronger today with its faith in the final victory considerably strengthened. The mighty imperialist power has also taken a lesson. It now realises that, faced with national annihilation, the unarmed people not only rise in protest but also hit back.

Though we gave a befitting reply to the Government in 1942, our final reply is yet to be delivered. This will be done only when we turn the Congress into a most powerful, dynamic and representative body.

1. Speech from a platform of Jhansi railway station, 12 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 13 September and *The Hindustan Times*, 13 September 1945.



At this stage I intend to administer a note of warning to Congressmen who indulge in party intrigues and cliques. The Congress is wedded to the goal of independence and cannot afford to have in its fold unbecoming tendencies. I warn Congressmen that we are going to deal severely and ruthlessly with all those, however high-placed they may be, who indulge in such dirty devices.

Though the coming elections seem very important, yet the Congress has not officially indicated a wish to fight them. On the contrary the U.P. Congress has recommended to the Congress High Command not to fight the elections until vital preliminaries had been clarified.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, I appeal to every Congressman to stay back from the election business unless he gets the final word from the Congress. Our approach to the election has changed. Now we do not approach the individual voter and beg for his vote. We appeal to the electorate in the name of the Congress. Consequently, in the final analysis, it is the Congress and not the individual which enters the election arena. Therefore, we must strengthen the Congress so that even at a moment's notice, we may be able to mobilise the entire electorate in favour of the Congress. In the coming few months we shall have an important programme to work out. I cannot say what that programme will be. I hope it will not be satyagraha but, whatever it may be, we should get ready and meet every eventuality and crisis.

I am sometimes shocked to see frictions<sup>3</sup> inside the ranks of students which have not cropped up as a result of differences on principles, but simply on account of a desire to capture power. You forget that we have to fight a mighty opponent, and we cannot afford the luxury of taking cudgels against our own men.

Question: Can you say what should be the relation of student organisations with the Communists?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I publicly condemned the Communists for their part in the 1942 struggle. Though student organisations are not political in character the Communists attempted to capture them. I do not

2. The United Provinces Pradesh Congress Committee had decided on 6 September 1945 not to consider names of any candidates for the general election until the Congress officially decided to take part in the election.
3. The All India Students' Federation and the Students' Congress, a later organisation, could not agree. In August 1945 the U.P. Congress Committee had recognised the Students' Congress as the representative organisation.



like the idea of capturing organisations by any political party. Students should join the Students' Congress which supports the Congress and which has an identical policy.

Q: Do you believe in the reported death of Subhas Bose?

JN: Like many other people I also do not believe the story of the death of Subhas Bose.

Q: Have you received any fresh reports<sup>4</sup> after your recent press conference in Delhi where an American correspondent doubted the truth of the story?

JN: Yes, I have received a number of reports which have raised grave doubts in me, and I disbelieve the authenticity of the news.

4. About the survival of Subhas Bose.

## 5. Brutal Treatment of Under-trials<sup>1</sup>

On my return to my province I must take the first opportunity to express my horror and disgust at a recent occurrence in Benares, news of which reached me in Bombay.

It was reported that three under-trial political prisoners in a Benares jail were to be taken for trial to a court, which was situated about a mile away. They were in fetters and had handcuffs and yet they were asked to walk this distance. They said that it was not possible for them to walk with fetters on and that they should be taken in a conveyance. This was refused and they were knocked down and dragged by the legs and arms all the way to the court, just as a dead animal might be dragged. Their clothes were torn, their skins scraped off, and they arrived at their destination with their backs and buttocks torn and bleeding. On the way a request for water was met with insults.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 September 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 30 September 1945.

I find it difficult to believe that such sadistic horrors can be perpetrated even by those who, by long practice in them, have ceased to function as normal human beings. But everything was done in public in a great city like Benares; the evidence is there and the local Bar Association has protested. What amazes me still further is that anyone who saw this horror could have tolerated it for an instant. There are some things which cannot be tolerated whatever the consequences.

It is reported that the person chiefly responsible was a police inspector by name<sup>2</sup>. . . . That man should be tried in open court for an offence which surely exceeds in its enormity and inhumanity almost anything that the Penal Code contains. But responsibility must rest also on the Police Superintendent and the District Magistrate and the whole administration under which sadism and frightfulness and inhumanity in such extreme forms flourish.

2. Name omitted.

## 6. The Muslim League and Violence<sup>1</sup>

I am not a regular reader of the *Dawn* newspaper and only rarely see it. The *Dawn* of September 27 contains the following sentence in its leading article: "As regards the treatment alleged to have been meted out to the Maulana by League leaders, we can only say that brickbats, rather than bouquets, are always and in all places in store for puppets and showboys." (This refers to the Congress President, Maulana Azad).

Similar and even stronger incitements to violence, often directed to persons who are named, are frequently made in public speeches by prominent members of the Muslim League. Only a few days ago, at a public meeting held in Allahabad, vulgar abuse of individuals and threats of violence reached a new height.

One can deplore this vulgarity and ignore threats. But *Dawn* is supposed to be the official organ of the Muslim League, and it is pertinent to inquire if brickbats, violence and riots are the official policy of

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 October 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 2 October 1945.

the Muslim League. Is this going to be their method of approach to the elections and their attempt to justify the desirability of Pakistan? Indeed, even Pakistan seems to have receded into the background so far as the speeches of Muslim Leaguers are concerned; only abuse and threats of violence remain.

This is a poor argument and not likely to impress anybody. But it is not my business to impose my code of morals or decency or peaceful political action, based on reason and argument, on others, who wish to function differently. The Muslim League is perfectly free to indulge in its own variety of polemics supported by brickbats. My only concern is to know if *Dawn's* statements represent the official and carefully considered policy of the League.<sup>2</sup>

2. The *Dawn* in reply said that it had been indulging in metaphor.

## 7. Independence in Three Years<sup>1</sup>

Circumstances prevented me from addressing you earlier, although I was released three and a half months ago, and I feel that it is a very auspicious occasion, today being Gandhi Jayanti, that I have an opportunity of appearing before you after a long interval. It is also appropriate that we recall today the vision of India, in the making of which Gandhiji has a great hand. During the last 25 years Gandhiji has rekindled a torpid generation. It now remains for the leaders to utilise this new consciousness for the achievement of independence.

When I was in jail and read the news, whatever reached us, of the happenings of August 1942 and afterwards, I could not correctly assess the strength which the nation had gained from that movement. But we read the accounts with a feeling of great pride, for they demonstrated that the people could rise, if the occasion demanded, against any power. And, it should be remembered that those were the times when the country was full of British and American troops. Repression was carried out all over the country; still, common people, including in many cases, people from the Indian states, though without leaders, rose

1. Speech at Allahabad, 2 October 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 3 October, *The Hindu*, 4 October, *The Tribune*, 4 October and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 6 October 1945.



to the occasion. The movement was a mass and spontaneous movement. It completely changed the shape of India. In the Ahmadnagar Fort, we used to ask ourselves what effect the 1942 movement would have on the country. We all concluded that we could not answer this question until we came into contact with the people. Now that I have been out of jail and have visited a few places in the country and seen huge crowds of men and women attracted by Congress leaders, I am convinced that the strength, which the nation has gathered, is tremendous. The atmosphere of enthusiasm which I notice is quite different from what it was before 1942. There is no more need now of creating fervour and enthusiasm in the nation. The enthusiasm and strength are now there. The question before us, and before all of you, is that we have to see that this strength is not frittered away, but usefully employed to achieve the goal of independence for which we have been striving for the last so many years.

What is necessary is discipline and *sangathan*. We are passing through a very delicate period and we have to tackle important national and international questions. The first duty of the people is to strengthen the *sangathan* of the Congress, which is the only organisation that can free the country. We should not involve ourselves in sectional or communal quarrels or petty matters that weaken our strength. We should increase the Congress membership and carry the Congress message to every home. We should have active members. The organisation should not be considered as the property of a handful of people. The enrolment should be started in Allahabad from tomorrow and I will ascertain the position by the end of this month. I also call for the enrolment of larger numbers of volunteers. I do not know if the wartime restriction on this is still in force. I have no anxiety on this score. We do not need volunteers for any movement. There is a need to instil discipline in the volunteer organisation. I was surprised to see the efficiency of the volunteers at Poona. Even little children have joined the Seva Dal at Poona. There is much work to be done for which I want the volunteer organisation to play a role. One of the fields of this work is the coming elections. I do not have much interest in elections, for we cannot achieve much from them. But the results of the elections have a great effect on our movement. If we win the elections our movement will get greater force. It is, therefore, necessary that we should fight the elections with enthusiasm and dignity and we must fight them successfully. I am sure of the Congress success in general non-Muslim constituencies and I feel that there may be no opposition against the Congress candidates in many of the constituencies. I am also confident of the success of the candidates who stand on Congress tickets for Harijan seats. But, as far as Muslim

seats are concerned, it will not be an easy fight for the Congress. There will be strong opposition to the Congress candidates from the Muslim League and certain other Muslim organisations. The Congress will put up a strong fight. In this connection, I warn the Congress workers not to slacken their enthusiasm. They should not do anything that may bring down the dignity of our organisation. Several threats are being given to us by the opposite parties in statements and public speeches, but we must neither be intimidated by them nor should we retaliate to them. We must maintain the dignity of our organisation, and conduct the fight by legitimate and dignified means.

A pamphlet, issued by the Muslim League, was handed over to me. In it, I have been quoted to have stated that I threatened to use an atom bomb in Pakistan. I never said anything of this kind. In my speeches at Lahore and elsewhere, I referred to the invention of the atom bomb and said that it would be difficult for small countries to protect themselves from big powers which may possess the atom bomb. Therefore, I pleaded against the division of India, which would considerably weaken its power, and make it difficult to protect itself in the world of atom bombs. On the basis of such a statement I have been represented to have said that I would use an atom bomb in Pakistan.

It will be a very false step, if we do anything which will cause communal bitterness. We shall only delay the dawn of independence. I, therefore, urge that no such step should be taken from the Congress side. The British are packing up. Let the Hindus and Muslims realise that they will have to settle their differences among themselves after the exit of the third party.

Talking to a friend<sup>2</sup> in 1938, I predicted that foreign rule in India would end within 10 years. Seven years have passed since. It is not possible to say that in three years India will be completely free, but it will not be surprising if the question of independence is solved within this period. So the independence of the country is coming. It may take one year, two years or even longer, but it is inevitable. The question is only of time. You should conserve your strength and wrest your freedom from foreign hands.

Though the questions that are engaging the attention of various countries in the world are different, all these questions relate to the shaping of a new world. It is a pity that in India the old bureaucratic conditions still prevail. The British empire has lost much of its past glory because the war has reduced its power. It does not now have the strength to shoulder the burden of the empire. But the big officials in the country still behave in the same old fashion. We do not find

2. It was in fact the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow.



any change in the pomp and show of its representatives in the country—Governors and others. They have not changed with the changing conditions. This is a strange phenomenon.

I deprecate the present administration for its low standards and corruption. It is surprising that though the authorities admit the existence of corruption, the corruption still continues. But in India, no one thinks of trying these culprits who are worse than any war criminals, who have become millionaires and multimillionaires on the lives of so many millions who died in the Bengal famine. There are other types of criminals who took advantage of the disturbed conditions in India during the last three years. If you want to search for these real criminals you will find them in Delhi. But no trial will be ordered to try them.

The Indian National Army was formed of picked people who demonstrated great capacity. Indians in the army seldom rise above the ranks of jamadars and subedars. The war has proved that every part of India can produce people who can be the most capable soldiers and officers. The distinction of martial and non-martial races is gone. The war has also proved the capacity of Indians in technical warfare. The Indian National Army included young men, who acted as generals because of their capacity. The I.N.A. provided opportunities to Indians to prove their capacity for leadership and generalship. The country unanimously thinks that these men should be treated as war prisoners and should not be tried. If the wish of the country is ignored and if any harm is done to them there will be a great stir and a tremendous repercussion in the country.

The Indian National Army has also taught us the lesson of communal amity. Of the three persons facing the trial,<sup>3</sup> one is a Muslim, the other is a Hindu and the third is a Sikh. The I.N.A. itself was composed, in equal proportions of these communities. They all ate together and lived together. They had thereby no communal problem, though in India this problem persists. They have refused any defence for them on communal lines.<sup>4</sup> They want their defence on a national level, and to be undertaken by the Defence Committee set up by the Congress.

3. A public trial of Shah Nawaz Khan, P.K. Sehgal and G.S. Dhillon was to open on 5 November 1945 at the Red Fort in Delhi on charges of "waging war against the King" and "gross brutality" in trying to induce their fellow-prisoners to join them.
4. Jinnah had sent word to Shah Nawaz Khan that he would defend him if he dissociated himself from the other accused. Shah Nawaz Khan refused. "We have stood shoulder to shoulder in the struggle for freedom. Many comrades have died on the field of battle inspired by our leadership. We stand or fall together."



On India's independence depends the independence of all enslaved people of the Pacific, namely the Javanese and the Indo-Chinese. The Java movement leader has declared that he is fighting for freedom on the Congress lines.<sup>5</sup> I have also received a letter from Africa in which it is stated that the Africans are watching India's struggle for freedom, which they wish to follow. Their fight for their independence on the lines of the Congress indicates that the question of the independence of India has got more significance. It implies that the Congress, in fighting for independence, is also fighting for the independence of other slave countries. Therefore, India will have to persist in fighting, not only for the freedom of its own, but for the greater responsibility of taking up the struggle of other countries. The world will not be rid of war unless the domination of one country over another is done away with. This control of one country over the other is one of the fundamental reasons for wars. This thing will have to go.

The day when India will have its freedom is not far off, and when it comes, the British Government will no more interfere in our problems. We will then sit together and settle our problems. We must, therefore, be prepared for this situation, and keeping this fact in view that we have to solve our problems ourselves, we must fight the coming elections. I request the Hindus, the Muslims and others to go to the city Congress Committee office and verify whether their names are correctly entered in the electoral rolls. If there are any mistakes, the office should be informed so that it may rectify the mistakes.

5. Dr. Sukarno had said on 29 September 1945: "I have drunk deeply of the principles which guide the Indian National Congress and am anxious to achieve Indonesian ideals nonviolently."

## 8. The Case for the Congress<sup>1</sup>

I condemn the Government for its deeds during the last three years. I charge the Government with the responsibility for the Bengal famine,

1. Speech at Lucknow, 4 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 6 October 1945 and from Home Dept. File No. 33/26/45-Poll. (1), National Archives of India.

with perpetrating atrocities on innocent villagers, with imposing excessive collective fines<sup>2</sup> and realising war subscriptions, and with encouraging bribery and corruption among its officials.

Some of the atrocities have been listed in the report of the sub-committee appointed by the Benares Congress Committee to enquire into police excesses committed during the August movement in Benares. The report cited an instance in which the police in their zeal to realise a fine suspended a child with his head downwards in the presence of his parents and lighted a fire below his head.

I also refer to the recent occurrence in Benares when three under-trial political prisoners with fetters on them were dragged on a public highway for about a mile. It is a great shame for the people of Benares to have tolerated such a scene. I hold Sir Maurice Hallett and his Government responsible for such incidents.

There is much talk about war criminals. The time is not far off when we shall prepare our list of anti-national criminals, those who mercilessly crushed the spirit of our patriots, who opened fire on them, and who accepted bribes and sucked the blood of the poor. We shall never forget them. We have a long memory. Such things cannot continue for long. Was it for fun that we for so long faced bullets, or that on our return from jails we found our houses quite empty?

Some of the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council have enriched themselves and worked against national interests. I charge the members of the Executive Council of corruption and bribery. Shameful stories of corruption were always heard but at this time English and Indians, Hindus and Muslims were all indulging in money-making business, as has never been before. We are angry for it but what can we do when we have no power at our disposal? They occupied high posts and advised the Government to carry out such malpractices but we cannot turn them out. But the time for throwing them out is coming. It may take a year, two or even more but come it must when all such elements will be swept away by one broomstick.

Pakistan is an impracticable proposition. I accuse the British Government and the Muslim League of creating obstacles in the path of the Congress. I solemnly declare that in spite of them, the Congress is determined to march forward towards its cherished goal of independence. The Congress has made innumerable sacrifices in the last 25 years and they have not gone in vain. What has the Muslim League done to ameliorate the condition of the Muslim masses?

2. Within a few months of August 1942 the total of punitive tax amounted to nearly Rs. 20 lakhs.



I am confident that, leaving aside the Muslim League which does not represent the whole of Muslim opinion in India, patriotic Muslim organisations, inspired by the ideal of freedom, are with the Congress and are opposed to the Muslim League. The cry of Pakistan is a slogan of imaginary fears. The Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab and the Muslims of Bengal are dead against Pakistan and no one can force it on them. The Muslim League argues that the Hindus will oppress the Muslims in a free India. It also argues that the Muslims are a brave nation. These two arguments are incompatible. A brave nation should be fearless.

The Congress has no intention of usurping the rights of the minorities, all of whom will receive their due share and representation when the time comes. The Indian Muslims in Britain are wholeheartedly with the Indian National Congress<sup>3</sup> and the predominantly Muslim populations of Java and Sumatra and other eastern Asiatic countries always look to the Congress for guidance.

The United Provinces will not be included in Pakistan. What kind of 'stan' do you want? Would the nawabs of the U.P. migrate to Pakistan leaving behind their zamindari and taluqdari?

Whatever might be the charges against the Indian National Army, its members, who are predominantly Muslims and Sikhs, are inspired by the highest ideals of patriotism. I warn the Government that if the members of the I.N.A., instead of being regarded as prisoners of war, are treated as criminals, a wave of resentment will sweep the length and breadth of the country. Forget all your slogans. Adopt the two slogans of the I.N.A., which are *Delhi Chalo* and *Jai Hind*.<sup>4</sup>

I am not unduly enthusiastic about the elections. The Congress knows that it enjoys the confidence of the people and its candidates will sweep the polls. The elections are the springboards to reach our destination, namely, Swaraj. I warn the Government officers against interference, which will not be tolerated for a moment. The present Government is dead against the Congress and that is why assemblies all over India have been hurriedly dissolved — an act which is a positive proof of panic and cowardice.

I exhort you to enrol yourselves as members of the Congress and actively assist in the reorganisation of Congress Committees throughout the province.

3. On 2 September 1945, the National Muslim Committee in Britain, in a resolution, denounced the idea of Pakistan, condemned the "reactionary policy" of the Muslim League and accused Jinnah of an "unpatriotic" attitude.

4. "March to Delhi" and "Victory to India."



## 9. Voting Facilities for Members of Armed Services<sup>1</sup>

For some time past I have been receiving complaints from persons serving in the army and allied defence services to the effect that facilities for voting at the coming elections were not being given to them. I understand that the Viceroy gave an assurance sometime ago that these facilities would be given. But complaints continue and servicemen demand for themselves in India and overseas the same facilities as were given to British servicemen for enrolment as voters, for free propaganda and approach to political parties and for voting. They complain that military authorities are ignoring their representations for enrolment on voters' lists. The Congress fully supports this demand.

It is improper and unfair to deprive our men in the Army, the Navy and the Air Force of their right of citizenship. Much has been said about their courage and ability on the field of battle and of the necessity of making some provision for them. It is odd that all this should lead to a practical deprivation of the right to vote. I trust that full effect will be given to the Viceroy's assurance in this matter and every facility will be given to our servicemen to vote and to attend election meetings.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 10 October 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 October 1945.

## 10. Strengthen the Congress<sup>1</sup>

I have to congratulate you, students and people, on your splendid response to the challenge thrown by the Government during the August struggle. Your deeds have been remarkable. By your courage and chivalry you not only upheld the honour and glory of India, but also enhanced its prestige in the world. Reports of some of your deeds reached us while we were in Ahmadnagar. But everything you did might

1. Speech at Varanasi, 11 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 and 14 October 1945.

not be correct. I am proud that the students and the people proved to the world that Indians will not be submissive to foreign subjugation.

I have noticed tremendous awakening and enthusiasm in the people, wherever I have gone after my release from detention. I hope that the people will maintain their spirit and strengthen the Congress by remaining united so that the country can soon reach its goal of complete independence. Mere shouting of slogans will not serve the purpose. To achieve our aim, it is most necessary to properly organise the masses and direct their enormous strength in the right channel.

I warn you that the coming few months are the most critical in the history of the nation. It is essential that you remain cautious and vigilant. The first task before you is to strengthen the Congress by making it a disciplined and organised body and also by enrolling four-anna members. You should check whether the names of those who are entitled to vote are found in the electoral rolls.

The Congress has decided to take part in the forthcoming elections. It is not very difficult to win the elections if we run a well-organised electioneering campaign. The volunteers must convey the message of the Congress to every house and to every man, and thus make the Congress organisation more powerful.

There is no organisation in India which can be considered a rival to the Congress, except the Muslim League. I warn the people against treating lightly the League's challenge. Hard work is needed for a successful response to the challenge, but we should give no ground for any unpleasantness with the League. This has to be avoided, otherwise the Government may exploit such unpleasantness for its own ends.

Great men always think great things, so also great organisations. The Congress will not be satisfied merely with occupying all seats in the assemblies and the councils. It will feel satisfied only by getting full control of the administration.

Congressmen cannot be over-confident of winning the elections in Muslim constituencies. But, by proper and fair means, the Congress will surely achieve success there too.

The present Government is corrupt and is demoralised. It is most necessary and urgent to do away with such a Government by winning the elections. The six years of advisory regime in the United Provinces has been responsible for unprecedented official corruption and nepotism. This is horrible. It is impossible to imagine what more misfortune and horror the few more months will entail. By accepting high positions in the Viceroy's Executive Council the Indian members have put themselves to shame. We contest the elections not to occupy the same chairs at Delhi. At the same time the Congress does not mean to



perform any miracle. The immediate aim of the Congress is to drive away the British Government out of India. I feel that we are marching with speed towards this goal.

## 11. The Congress Represents the People<sup>1</sup>

I have heard of the distressing stories of repression and suffering you have undergone. While on my way to Saidabad I was shown a culvert which was the scene of a police firing, in which some lives were lost.

When there is a war shocking incidents are bound to occur and I am prepared to understand them, but incidents of torture cannot be forgiven. The incidents of Handia tehsil during the last three years are known to all. But the district to which I am going, namely, Ballia, is the scene of the greatest repression in the province. Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, and many other places in the province and in the country in general, provide woeful tales. There was a wave of revolution and people rose through their inner strength, though they were without a leader or guide. In such a situation, mistakes, big or small, were committed. But the greatest mistake would have been if, when the occasion demanded, the people had failed to rise to save the country's honour. Such a time came three years ago, when Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders were shut behind prison bars. People then rose, though without a leader, and caused enough stir. But if they had kept quiet, the country would have lost much power. The Government did not give us time for negotiations, but took steps to crush the people. But the people kept the honour of the country high, and their strength has increased immensely after the 1942 movement. This demonstrates that there is so much inner power<sup>1</sup> in the people that will find release when they are faced with a challenge. All this is the gain from the 25 years of struggle on the lines laid down by Mahatma Gandhi.

During the last three years, many kisans have been ejected from their tenancies. They also suffered due to cloth shortage and punitive tax collections. Perhaps the greatest hardship they had to undergo was

1. Speech at Saidabad in Allahabad district, 11 October 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 12 October and *The Hindustan Times*, 12 October 1945.



at the time when contributions to the war fund were exacted. Even after the war, such collections are being made for victory celebrations.

But the question before you is not of cloth scarcity etc., but it is of changing the entire administrative machinery. Corrupt people have to be swept away by a broomstick.

I am confident that the present administration cannot last long. The famine in Bengal, where lakhs of people were ruined or died of starvation, indicates that the Government has neither the guts nor the brain to solve the big problems of the country. The only thing that the Government knows is the use of lathi by the police on a few people. It cannot tackle the major economic and other problems. When the Government cannot solve such problems, it has no right to exist.

It is, therefore, necessary that we should soon achieve Swaraj, which will give a people's government. Since the resignation of the Provincial Congress Governments there have been no representatives of the people in the administration, and the Governor has been doing what he likes.

The U.P. Governor has attained the greatest distinction in adopting measures to crush the people. Whether his three years' labours, in that direction, succeeded or not, he alone can know.

Only a Swaraj government can help the country in the present circumstances. The A.I.C.C. resolution of August 1942 has said this very thing, and the Congress still adheres to this stand. Our problems can be solved only when we have our own government.

The Government wanted this resolution to be withdrawn, but the resolution was passed, not by a few persons, but by the nation. It was not only not withdrawn, but has been reiterated at the last session of the All India Congress Committee. The struggle for Swaraj must continue.

In a Swaraj government, you will have people's government in which all communities, Hindus, Muslims, Christians etc., will share equally the power and the responsibility.

It will be the government of the people and for the people. In such a state the chosen representatives of the people, not a handful of capitalists or zamindars, will be in charge of the government machinery. Any man can approach them and express his grievances. If these representatives do not look to their interests the people can remove them from office.

Under the present rule, the people do not have power to turn out even a police constable. If the people have real control over the administration, high officers or even governors can be removed by them. Instead of serving the people these public servants tyrannise them. A

people's raj is, therefore, necessary. They may profess different religions but in administrative matters, religious considerations do not have a place. An essential requisite for a good administration is that there should be no interference with anybody's religion.

Many people are of the view that the zamindari system is not a good system. The owner of the land should be the kisan who toils, and not the person who enjoys rent sitting at home. This is also my view, and that of many others in the Congress. There is no communalism in the question of abolishing the zamindari system. It will benefit Hindu and Muslim kisans alike.

Similarly there are other major problems, like the question of poverty, which affect everybody. Any problem affecting the country affects Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike. The Congress has in its fold all the communities. It is true that Hindus are in a majority among its members, but that is because Hindus are in a majority in the country. The Congress, therefore, aims at tackling the country's problems with due regard to the interests of all classes. I therefore warn the people against falling victims to the communalist propaganda. I would ask the Muslims present here to vote for the Congress candidates, or for those nationalist Muslim organisations whose aims are akin to those of the Congress.

I have no doubt that the Congress is so strong that there may not be contests in many constituencies, but it does not mean that we must slacken our efforts. I advise the kisans to strengthen the Congress *sangathan* by joining it in large numbers, whether Hindus or Muslims, and also to join the Congress volunteer organisation which serves their own brethren in the village. I would ask the kisans to make sure that their names are entered in the voting register and, when the time comes for polling, to vote for the Congress candidates.

You should remember that there are only two contesting parties in the freedom struggle, the Congress and the British Government, and if any other party comes for the vote, you should ask what part it had played in the freedom fight these three years.

The Congress is the only organisation which represents, without distinction, Hindus and Muslims and all other communities and is fighting for the independence of the country. It is wrong to say that the Congress wants to crush any community. You should not be led away by such a propaganda, which is resorted to merely to perpetuate foreign rule.



## 12. Bravery and Determination<sup>1</sup>

I have heard all that had happened here.<sup>2</sup> The officials had indulged in the most brutal acts. I am not in the habit of complaining against anybody. I want to set men right. I want to create that strength in our people which may enable them to face criminals like them.

During the last 15 years Mahatma Gandhi has given us unique guidance. He has removed fear from the hearts of the people. We are gaining that strength which will lead us to our goal. People in this country have learnt not to bow before injustice since the day Gandhiji appeared before us.

The Muslim League has also been talking of bringing redress to people and fighting for independence. What have they done during these 25 years to justify their existence? The League has gone so far as to describe the August rebellion as a fight against the Muslims. It is an amazing and staggering statement to make. The August rebellion was a people's movement for freedom, and Hindus and Muslims and others participated in it.

I congratulate you for your brave stand in the August rebellion. It would have been disgraceful if you had tolerated all that and had not risen to the occasion. You fought well, but you fell. It does not matter. Now you are rising again with greater vigour and vitality to stand against the power that ruthlessly and shamelessly exploits you and tries to humiliate you. I assure you that the Congress wants *praja raj*. In such a system people will be allowed to manage their own affairs and the permanent settlement will have no place. It is a dead weight on people.

You often ask me to help in easing the cloth shortage. How can I and how can you? An alien bureaucracy which is steeped in bribery and corruption and incompetence is managing our affairs. We must wipe out this bureaucracy. We have all to work more unitedly and with greater determination to get power in our hands.

1. Speech at Rasra in Ballia district, 12 October 1945. From *The Leader*, 14 October 1945.

2. During the 1942 movement in Rasra tehsil, a man was kicked by an elephant and dragged on the road; women were forced out of their houses; houses were looted and burnt; wearing of the Gandhi cap was made a crime.



### 13. Tribute to People of Ballia District<sup>1</sup>

Brave men and women of Ballia, I congratulate you. The story of your brave deeds has spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, and I have come to you, attracted by your fame. No amount of repression, let loose upon you by the bureaucracy, has been able to cow you down. The capture of power by nonviolent means and the people's raj established by you for a week in 1942 is the forerunner of what is going to happen in this country very soon. India can never forget the brave people of Ballia, its kisans and youths.

The entire country will praise you for your sacrifices. Sacrifices have been made by the country for the last 25 years and in the test, the country has come out so far successful, under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders. Nineteen forty-two was a big test for you. Your sacrifices have brought much more strength to the Congress than it ever possessed before. As you have attained so much strength, it is difficult for any power to rule over you. You must be independent soon. Though I cannot predict the time, I can say that your independence cannot now be withheld for a long time.

The days of August 1942 cannot be forgotten. We have no feeling of revenge, but those who acted inhumanly towards the people cannot be excused. Be they big officers or small, British or Indian, they are to be brought to book and tried to demonstrate to the world how bureaucracy behaved during those memorable days. If they were tried today, they would be in places worse than jails.

The inhuman way in which the people of Ballia were terrorised is scandalous. I recall the incident when a boy gave his life to keep the honour of the national flag. During the August disturbances the boy went to the Bairia police station to hoist the national flag. The police threat, that any attempt at hoisting the national flag would meet with grave consequences, had no effect on the boy. He went straight with the flag and faced the police who shot him dead. India can never forget that boy. This shows that people have realised the meaning of the flag and the significance of independence and unity for which it stands.

I stress the need of harnessing your strength which you have gained during the last three years of suffering and distress. You must organise

1. Speech at Bairia in Ballia district on 12 October 1945, where 21 persons were killed in a police firing in the August movement. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 14 October and *The Hindu*, 15 October 1945.

yourselves and enrol more active members and volunteers in the Congress and represent your organisation in every part of the country and in every hearth and home.

We have to solve big problems, problems which concern all, irrespective of caste and creed or religion, and we must get ready with work.

We resolved in 1942 that the British Government should go out of the country, and we still adhere to this resolution. The terrible police repression of the last three years had no effect on the people of this country who are determined to win Swaraj. During the movement, though we had to fight against arms we remained nonviolent. This shows how we organised ourselves according to Gandhiji's ideals. I exhort you to strengthen the Congress organisation. I assure you that Swaraj will be won in the near future. Swaraj means people's raj where all Indians will have an equal share in the administration of the country.

The permanent settlement will be abolished. It can stay no longer. I ask everyone to vote for the Congress. The Muslims should not vote for any organisation which is communal, because such an organisation always makes the question of independence a secondary one. The Congress, which is fighting for independence, is representative of all the communities in the country.

#### 14. Indictment of British Officers<sup>1</sup>

I accuse them<sup>2</sup> of ruthless barbarity and tyranny of which they were guilty at Ballia. I said so at Ballia and I say it again before you.

I do not accuse these men because they resorted to firing. When a nation rises to fight, what is there to bewail, if the opposite side fires on us? But I do certainly condemn and accuse these people of ruthless barbarity which cannot be excused in any sense or by any code of argument.

The people are being harassed by the authorities and are forced to contribute to Victory funds and other such collections. It is amazing

1. Speech at Azamgarh, 13 October 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 16 October and *The Hindustan Times*, 16 October 1945.
2. The newspapers did not list the names of officials mentioned by Jawaharlal.



that officials want to sit tight on people's chests to realise money and then celebrate victory. This is indecent, but the fact is that bureaucracy is vulgar and inhuman from top to bottom.

I am not condemning a few subordinate officials. I accuse everybody from the Governor down to the *patwari* of oppressing helpless people. These things have got to end. People come to me and complain against these officials. Do not pay a single pie for these funds, if you do not wish to. Come what may. I don't want people to tell me that they are terrified, and if they really are, I have nothing to do with them. If they have not yet learnt to get rid of fear what else have they learnt? I know that to be fearless and to oppose tyranny is to invite trouble and torture on many occasions. But is that enough reason to submit to injustice? We are out to get our freedom. If we don't learn to be fearless, what use can we be to our country. Remember, the country's freedom can be purchased at only one price. It is the price of our lives. We cannot hesitate to suffer and to lay down our lives if the country's freedom demands it.

People often talk of laying down their lives for this or for that. I want to make it clear that I want to die in doing my duty. I have no desire to give life ordinarily and easily. In the course of this duty and struggle, if one is shot dead and killed, it does not matter at all. Friends, strengthen yourselves, a great struggle still lies ahead. We are getting impatient with this administration, and we must sweep it away, and we will. I have no doubt that within a few years we will have the charge of our country. We will look to the needs of our people.

The poor kisans and labourers of the country joined the army for money. The present army of two million soldiers will be the soldiers of India's freedom fight.

The Indian National Army consists of the soldiers of independence and their lives must be saved. Their question is a matter of concern for the whole country as it is a question of life and death for these brave men. I do not say they did not make mistakes, but their aim was to free India. The whole country should view the trial of these men from this light. The brave people of a country are its wealth.

All who have fought and suffered for the ideal of freedom are my friends and comrades. It does not matter if they committed some mistakes. I want to make it clear that if anything happens to them the whole country from one end to the other will be affected. They are our brave men.

The Congress had realised the need for cooperation with the League and worked for it, but the League refused to listen unless the Congress



accepted the League claim that it represented all Muslims. Such acceptance would have meant the Congress signing its death warrant because the Congress sought to represent all. In view of this attitude of the League, the Congress has no alternative but to leave the League alone.

India's fight for independence cannot wait. We will march on our way and any one who does not want to join us can remain behind.

The Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha are communal organisations which regard the question of independence as a secondary matter. They would rather deal with other matters before fighting for independence. The problems that face the country today are not religious but economic problems which concern all, irrespective of caste, creed or religion and communal organisations cannot solve them.

You probably know that the National Planning Committee has been set up to keep in readiness plans to ameliorate suffering and improve the conditions of the famished millions of India who have been groaning under the British yoke. The day is to come when we will enjoy the sunshine of freedom and this freedom will be achieved by no other organisation except the Congress.

You have been sitting here since long and now you must be tired, and I too, have some more work, therefore I beg leave of you.

## 15. Swaraj for the People<sup>1</sup>

I do not like grumbling and complaining very frequently against all that happened to you during 1942. I would ask you to stop grumbling and try to get power as soon as possible and drive out those who exploit and ruin you. The Government itself is realising that it cannot stay in India much longer.

Power and freedom, when they are wrested from the alien government, will not be the monopoly of Congressmen alone. Swaraj will be for the people. There will be opportunities for every one to grow and develop. People will get proper education, food, clothing and all other amenities of life.

1. Speech at Ghazipur, 14 October 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 16 October, *The Hindustan Times*, 16 October and *The Hindu*, 17 October 1945.

I ask only one question from the leaders of communal organisations. What part have they taken during the last twenty five years, particularly during the last three years, in the struggle for the freedom of India? I tell you, they have taken no part specially in the last struggle when the entire nation had stood up against the British raj. The leaders of the Muslim League, instead of taking any part in the struggle, said that it was a Congress move to hurt the interests of the Muslims of India.

In that struggle of the nation, Hindus and Muslims suffered alike. It was a big event in the history of the country when the entire nation spontaneously rose like a flood in the river. The only thought which pervaded the nation then was the freedom of the country, and none other.

Communal organisations, be they the Hindu Mahasabha or the Muslim League, put the question of independence of the country as a secondary question. Of course, no one would say that he does not like Swaraj, but these communal organisations make the question of Swaraj dependent on certain other conditions. They put 'ifs' and 'buts' in the way of the freedom of the country. The Muslim League, for example, puts the condition of Pakistan first before the question of the independence of the country. And the result is that they stand in the way of the Congress, which is the only national organisation that is fighting for the independence of the country.

No one knows what will be the shape and position of the Congress after it has achieved the independence of the country.

Pakistan would mean the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. I ask as to what will happen to the Muslims of the United Provinces if Pakistan is established. Will they go and live in Pakistan? If so, what will happen to their landed property and other interests in the province? They can certainly not lift these things up and take with them to Pakistan.

The question of Pakistan, and any other such question, does not arise at present. The first question which should be in every Indian's heart at present is the question of the independence of the country. Pakistan and such other questions can only be decided after independence is achieved and the government restored to the people of the country.

I deprecate the spirit of lamentation over what had happened to you during the August movement. The nation had challenged the British Government and the Government in its turn had tried to suppress the nation's challenge. What is there to lament over it? The only thing which the nation can complain of is the vandalism which big officers and their subordinates, be they British or Indian, practised upon you. But even for this vandalism you had not to complain in the courts of



the present administration. There is no justice given in them. You have only to complain of these things to yourselves.

The strength, which the country has achieved during the last 25 years, since the struggle for freedom had started, has increased fifty times during the last three years. This struggle has removed the fear of the British raj from the minds of even ordinary masses of the country and this raj cannot now live long. The British Government does not have the power to crush the movement for freedom.

I, however, advise the people not to waste this strength. We have to harness this strength. After independence is achieved—and independence cannot be delayed long now—we have to face many big problems which will concern the common man, problems which will be of importance to Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians or any other community alike. We have to be prepared to meet these problems now, and we should, therefore, organise ourselves so that this strength which we have gained is not frittered away.

## 16. Appeal for Election Fund<sup>1</sup>

The Congress has decided to contest the elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies, in spite of the many handicaps and obstructions placed in its way. It will enter this contest on the issue of the immediate independence of India and equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of free India. It will have for its battle-cry 'Quit India', famous in India's story since the 8th August 1942, and firmly embedded in the minds of our people. After three years of storm and stress, of mass upheaval in India against alien and imperialist domination and its ruthless suppression, we have dedicated ourselves anew to the great and sacred cause of India's freedom, which has inspired our countrymen and countrywomen who have laid down their lives and undergone lifelong suffering. A chance comes to you now, our brothers and sisters in this province, to show your adherence to the National Congress, which

1. Allahabad, 15 October 1945. A joint statement issued by Jawaharlal, Govind Ballabh Pant, S.K.D. Paliwal, Purushottam Das Tandon, Acharya Narendra Deva, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Sampurnanand. *The Leader*, 20 October 1945.



has become the living and vibrant symbol of India's unconquerable will to freedom and independence, to the principles and objectives of the Congress, and to that well-beloved cause to which we have pledged ourselves so often. That adherence must now be shown by full support in every way to Congress candidates at the forthcoming elections, and by carrying the Congress message of freedom and equality to every town and village and home in the province.

We appeal to our people in this province to be true to this old and ever-new pledge which yet has to be redeemed, and to remember that in the elections that are to come, individuals do not count, sectarian cries do not count, petty issues do not count, small groupings do not count,—only one thing counts: the freedom and independence of our motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people. So, we make appeal to our comrades, old and new, to all those millions in our province who care and long for freedom, to stand by the Congress at this juncture and to give it all their help.

We appeal to our people for funds for the election campaign and connected activities. Large funds are needed for these purposes and we trust that all those who have the freedom of India at heart and sympathise with the Congress policy, whether they are rich or poor, will contribute to this fund and thus not only be partners in the success at the elections, but also be fellow-travellers in the onward march which will lead to the final stage of Swaraj and freedom.

All contributions to, and collections made for, this fund should be sent to the treasurer of the Provincial Congress Election Board, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Nainital, or to such banks as he may indicate.

## 17. The Position of Women in India<sup>1</sup>

I send my greetings to the U.P. Conference of the All India Women's Conference. I have long been of opinion that a nation's progress depends on the position of women there. The fall of India from her high status was partly at least due to the deterioration of the status and position of women in India. In a subject country men and women both

1. 29 October 1945. Message to U.P. Women's Conference held at Kanpur, 1 November 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 2 November 1945.

suffer the indignity of subjection to foreign rule and the numerous disabilities that flow from it. So the first and primary duty of every one is to do his or her utmost to free the country. Indeed it is in the performance of this duty that a person or a group gets rid also in some measure of other disabilities. We have seen during the past quarter of a century how the participation of women in the great national struggle in India has in effect raised their status in many ways and opened out opportunities to them.

Now we are on the verge of great changes but before these take place great efforts and sacrifices will be needed. In these I hope women will take a leading part and thus fit themselves for the responsibilities ahead. They will have the further task of getting rid of the many disabilities, legal, social and other, which today attach to their sex, so that they may play an equal part with their menfolk in the building up of a free India.

## 18. The Inevitability of Revolution<sup>1</sup>

The British and Indian officials who wanted to write off the Congress, and employed every means to crush it during the last three years, will live to see their wish entombed with an imperialism which is now taking its last few breaths.

I challenge these officers to go to Ballia and see for themselves the futility of their attempts. The people there, despite terrible repression, walk with straight backs and erect heads.

During Mahatma Gandhi's fast in February 1943, the District Magistrate of Moradabad ordered that no public demonstrations would be allowed in the event of Gandhiji's death. It is tragic to see the extent to which high Indian and British officials have fallen. What I am unable to understand is how people can tolerate such perfidious injunctions. The people have no right to freedom if they do not have the courage to feel for Mahatma Gandhi.

I do not want your plaudits. I want you to realise your pathetically insipid condition. Repression of kisans is still continuing. This has

1. Speech at Moradabad, 29 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 31 October 1945.

got to stop now. I can pardon shooting, I can pardon assaults, but I am unable to pardon atrocities perpetrated in cold blood.

A revolution is inevitable. It is only a question of time when it comes. Then we will be tested again.

The members of the Indian Civil Service are incapable of grasping the problems of the country. After the resignation of Congress Ministries, these men fully exploited the mischievous provisions of the D.I.R. All caution was thrown off and the government of the country was handed over to the police almost on a plate. For all practical purposes, it was a police raj in the country. Even now when the war is over, the people are being forced to contribute towards Victory Fund.

I resent the U.P. Governor's remarks against the Indian National Army.<sup>2</sup> If this had happened in a free country, the author of these remarks would have been hauled up for contempt of court.

The Government will extend its helping hand to any one except the Congress. Congressmen must therefore be prepared for every sacrifice. I exhort you to vote for the Congress candidate, Mr. Damodar Swarup Seth, for the Central Assembly.

2. Sir Maurice Hallett said on 12 October 1945 that "the so-called Indian National Army will fully deserve whatever punishment may be inflicted on them by court-martial and that they should certainly not be regarded as national heroes."

## 19. Congress Strength and Popularity<sup>1</sup>

The Congress is fighting elections on the Quit India resolution and a Congress victory in the elections will be of great benefit to India.

British rule over the country has become weak, inefficient and useless. I accuse the present Government and its big officers of being responsible for the Bengal famine. Such inefficiency would never have been tolerated in a free country. The only way to remedy this is to overthrow this Government.

1. Speech at Saharanpur, 24 November 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 26 November 1945.



But mere slogans and processions will not drive the British out of India. These have to be backed up by solid work.

The Government has been trying to crush the Congress for the last three years. The Congress, however, has come out of the ordeal stronger. I am proud that while leaders were in jail, the masses had upheld the honour of the country.

I express my indignation and grief at the police firings<sup>2</sup> in Calcutta but I urge upon the students the necessity of maintaining discipline.

The Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha are mere tools of the British raj and do not want freedom for the country. They went to the length of proposing to the Government that the Congress leaders should not be released from prison unless they disavowed the August resolution.

Though the Congress stands for communal unity there can be no compromise with the League under its present leadership. The Government wants a League victory because it feels that the League is friendly to it.

As an instance of Congress popularity, I can point out that the people of Java, Arabia, Egypt and Palestine, though they are mostly Muslims, put more confidence in the Congress than in the League. They always appealed to the Congress for help.

It is the age of the atom bomb. A terrible force has been found that will either create a new world or destroy the old.

2. Student demonstrations in Calcutta against the I.N.A. trials led, for three days from 21 November 1945, to clashes with the police and troops in which 37 died and 200 were injured.

## 20. The Increasing Strength of the People<sup>1</sup>

The world is passing through a revolution and has undergone a great change during the last three years. The movement, which we started in 1942, did not abate our strength, but increased it.

India is connected with the rest of the world. We were broad-minded with a broader vision in the past but since we narrowed down

1. Speech at Meerut, 27 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 28 November and *The Leader*, 30 November 1945.

our vision we considered that it was against religion to go outside India. We should now change with the world as it is changing. India is rich, but now because of the worthlessness of the Government we are forced to starve. In one of our provinces 35 lakhs died of starvation. But we are determined to end the worthlessness of the administration.

When we started a life of comfort, we became slaves, but now we are gaining strength and instilling a spirit of sacrifice and suffering. My belief is that India has vitality and is ready to shoulder its own responsibilities.

The main question before the country is of our independence which alone will ensure everyone bread, cloth and shelter. Where lies the Hindu-Muslim question in it? That every child should get education admits of no difference. But even in such matters obstacles are being placed.

We wish that the foundation of independent India should be based on such a firm footing that we may not only be free but we must be the greatest power in the world.

I strongly criticise the papers which exaggerate the events mentioned in the Pirpur report and try to fan bitter feelings among the Hindus and the Muslims. The Congress is so strong today that it can successfully face as mighty an empire as the British. It is all due to the power of the people. This power you should all increase.

Hindu freedom and Muslim freedom are absurd ideas which mislead the nation. We should remember that the foundation of India's freedom will be laid on mutual unity. We are so much enchained that we think like the British. People say that I am more of an Englishman but those who hate the English and wish India's freedom may not have those plans in their minds which I have for India's problems — food, cloth, work, cottage industries, and industrial concerns.

To divide India and establish Pakistan means nothing. The Meerut Muslim League secretary says that I shall finish their Pakistan by an atom bomb but where have I got it? The use of the atom bomb, if properly made, will lead to world peace, otherwise the world will be ruined.

During the last three years many a storm came, disturbances took place, repression was launched and every attempt was made to crush the Congress, but still you find the Congress more powerful today than ever before. This is the only body which can face the British Government. Other organisations have neither power nor willingness to take this path.

The Government has the capacity not of saving the people from hunger, but that of firing and using military force. Corruption and dishonesty

are rampant from top to bottom. I have no faith in the Labour Government. We must have faith in our own strength.

We should not elect the wrong kind of persons. The League has always put obstacles in the way of India's freedom. The League can also tolerate the present condition of India, but the Congress cannot. I cannot tolerate the interference of the British in the affairs of my country. I have no more patience. I want British rule to go. Whatever I am saying, it merely reflects the Indian mind.

## 21. Aim High at a Free India<sup>1</sup>

Independence Day! What memories it revives, of pledges taken, of storm and strife, of the vision of freedom which has drawn us all irresistibly during these many years. Again we meet to take that pledge, again to find ourselves dedicated to the service of India's freedom. When will one redeem that pledge? The day may come sooner than any of us anticipates. But it will not come without the utmost effort from us. So let us forget our little squabbles and aim high at a free India when the doors of opportunity will open out to every one.

1. *The Hindustan Times*, 26 January 1946.

## 22. The Folly of Disorder and Violence<sup>1</sup>

Independence is not far off now. We have assembled here today to renew our pledge demanding independence, but soon we will be assembling to pledge ourselves to maintain the independence that we will

1. Speech at Allahabad, 26 January 1946. From the *National Herald*, 28 January 1946.



have won. I would therefore stress this day that we must be careful in the methods that we adopt to win our independence. The methods should be such that when we have won our independence they must also help us to maintain it. And nonviolence, which the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress has suggested for the present as the method to achieve independence, is the only rightful way.<sup>2</sup>

If the Congress has to change its method of achieving independence, it will not do it quietly. The Congress will declare the change if ever made in its policy and then only adopt it.

The advantage of the policy of nonviolence adopted by the Congress at the present juncture is that it is the only instrument which can give a slave country like India, as it stands at present, the strength of mass activity or strength of morale.

Armed violence by a few in an age of heavy armaments can only have a success when this is the strength of an entire nation or a country. A few limited people, not backed by the whole country and with light arms like guns, swords and lathis, cannot match the countries possessed with heavy armaments. In India too, as long as it is dependent, there can be no heavy armament as is possessed by a big nation. So if a few people try to achieve independence by the use of light arms they will only be injuring the cause of the country to achieve its independence.

Personally, I mean by nonviolence, the nonviolence of the brave and not of the coward. People should not take shelter behind the policy of nonviolence and become cowards at the moment of a crisis. They should face the crisis in a brave nonviolent spirit.

Criticism has been made in some quarters that the policy of nonviolence of the Congress and the August 1942 disturbances are incompatible.<sup>3</sup> Those were the days of a crisis. In a crisis the people of an organisation cannot be judged by their emotional acts. The policy of the organisation is judged only by its actions in a peaceful atmosphere. So, if during August 1942 some people deviated from the policy of nonviolence, it was because under a crisis their emotions misled them. The Congress as an organisation has never deviated from the policy of non-

2. On 11 December 1945 the Working Committee, in a resolution drafted by Mahatma Gandhi, reiterated the Congress creed of nonviolence and emphasised the need for Congressmen to adhere strictly to the nonviolent method in the struggle for independence.
3. Aruna Asaf Ali and Achyut Patwardhan in a letter dated 17 January 1946 asked the Congress President for a clarification of the nonviolence resolution in relation to the 1942 movement and the part played by them in it.

violence, which it adopted after a mature consideration to be the policy to attain the independence of the country.

The adoption of the constructive programme and the use of khadi as embodied in the Independence Pledge are essential for the country to help achieve its independence. The constructive programme and charkha always draw attention towards the ordinary people and the masses. They help everyone to be self-sufficient and to stand on his own legs.

Kisans and labourers who form the backbone of the country have been suffering since long. It is our duty to give them relief as early as possible.

There is plenty of hidden talent in the country and, whenever the people get a chance, they will be able to prove their merit. Everyone should have a chance to develop and grow in coming days. We will concentrate on villages, and do our best for those who have been suffering since long.

It is not enough to turn out the British from the country. It is more important to be able to manage our affairs well after we have got rid of them. Therefore, it is necessary that we should have some idea of the things that we are going to do in the future rebuilding of India. It is a difficult and important task and we should start planning from now, so that we might not be found wanting when the occasion comes.

I do not agree with those who go on hunger strikes in jail for this thing and that. There might be occasions when a hunger strike is preferable to humiliation and suffering, but ordinarily it is improper to resort to a hunger strike. The U.P. Government does not have enough intelligence to realise that it is pursuing a very wrong policy. It ought to have known that times are fast changing and soon the power will pass to the hands of those who enjoy the confidence of the people.

The recent disturbances in Bombay<sup>4</sup> and Calcutta show that even the slightest spark in these days is enough to kindle a big fire in the country. I will not sit in judgment as to who is at fault for these unfortunate happenings, but deprecate the use of teargas, bombs and firing by the police.

If the atomic energy behind the atom bomb is utilised for constructive power, it will very much develop the entire structure of the world. The world is bound to change within the coming few years and I hope that atomic energy will be used in constructive power to uplift mankind.

4. On 23 January 1945, the printing press of the *People's Age* was badly damaged and 40 Communists were injured in an attack on their headquarters.



I appeal to you to help in getting suitable employment for the released men of the Indian National Army.

### 23. Advice to Villagers<sup>1</sup>

Brother peasants,

It is always a pleasure to meet you. I greatly admire your affection and enthusiasm. You complain to me of bribery, corruption, mismanagement and other things. I fully understand your difficulties and know that these things exist. But these things cannot go unless we have got power in our hands. I want to tell you that 1946 is a year of big events for India. Many things are going to happen. Vast changes are in sight. You must be ready to face the problems as they come. You must join the Congress in large numbers and strengthen it to carry on the struggle for freedom.

The Congress is trying its best to ameliorate your sufferings and hopes that things will soon change and many facilities will be available to you in the days to come.

1. Address to peasants who had gathered in the compound of Anand Bhawan, Allahabad, 1 February 1946. From the *National Herald*, 2 February 1946.

### 24. The Martyrs of 1942<sup>1</sup>

I honour the dead of 1942. I am proud of them. I am not at all sorry, as some incline to be, about their death. What is there if 25 persons died in Allahabad if it is for a noble cause? Even if 2,000 men

1. Speech at the Martyrs' Day meeting, Allahabad, 3 February 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 5 February and *The Hindusthan Standard*, 6 February 1946.



had died, and died with honour, I would not be sorry. It is better to have a short life full of honour and courage, rather than have a long life of shame and humiliation. It is not dignifying to complain against anyone or of our sufferings.

The year 1942 laid the deep foundation for freedom. This rebellion was the result of long suffering and humiliation. The common man showed great courage, fought bravely and defended India's honour which was in his keeping.

The movement of 1942 was a period of crisis. British imperialism, after clapping the leaders of the people inside jails, wanted to end once for all our freedom struggle. Alas! the bureaucracy had no idea of the pulse of the country. Men, women and children, all rose as one to resist the attempt at ending the freedom fight for ever. It was a great thing that the people revolted and saved India's honour. This will go down in history as a great event.

The world must know — as the 1942 movement has shown — that if any attempt is made by British imperialism to crush the people in their fight for independence, the whole nation will rise to challenge it.

The world is on the threshold of a revolution and the coming years will be epochmaking. You must be prepared to face the responsibilities and march with revolutionary times. You have to increase your strength and remove all differences and disruptions among you to prepare yourselves, not only to achieve freedom, but also to shoulder the responsibilities which will fall on you when independence is achieved.

I get angry when I feel that one man rules from Delhi the whole of India, or that one man from Lucknow dominates over the entire people of this province. Whenever I see the Union Jack flying over the buildings in India I become enraged. It bitterly reminds me that even now we are slaves. Such things should spur us to greater action, better organisation, more discipline and a deathless determination to put an end to foreign rule.

Though I regret hunger strikes by political prisoners in U.P. jails, particularly by Jogesh Chatterjee, I strongly condemn the action of the Government in not granting even the ordinary facilities, which are given to more culpable prisoners all over the world.

Yet I do not approve of the idea of political prisoners going on hunger strikes. I particularly dislike the kind of hunger strike as is resorted to by one of the political prisoners in the Naini Central Jail in protest against the selection of candidates by the Congress Central Parliamentary Board to the United Provinces Assembly elections. This man has fallen in my estimation.

I am also amazed that beastly treatment is being meted out to the prisoners in jails. I remind you that this happens simply because we are too weak to put an end to it. It is strange that when the present atmosphere indicates the coming of independence, horrible conditions in jail and detention of hundreds of political prisoners should continue. I, however, assure you that the time is not far off when independence will come to India, and you will yourself have the opportunity to look into these things.

## 25. No Alternative to the Congress<sup>1</sup>

The Congress is the only organisation which can break the bonds of slavery. It has behind it the power which comes from the masses and from twenty-five years' revolutionary activity. It is pledged to the single goal of winning the country's freedom.

The Congress envisages a panchayat of the people without any distinction of caste or creed. The Congress is fighting the elections not to form ministries, but to win Swaraj. It is our aim to prevent unworthy people, who by getting into the legislatures, may do things that ultimately go against the interest of India. And we are going to the legislatures to add a weapon to our armoury.

For India, today, the main issue is the winning of freedom. Until Swaraj is won all minor issues have to recede to the background. The present bureaucratic administration governing India's destiny has proved utterly incompetent to tackle the major problems facing the country and, instead of remedying the evils, is adding to complexities. The Government has not even touched the fringe of the two main problems, namely, poverty and unemployment. The creation of a post here and a post there cannot solve these problems.

The Muslim League's demand for Pakistan is an impossible proposition. All parties are unanimous in their view that Pakistan is injurious to the country. A divided India can never remain free.

1. Speech at Malihabad near Lucknow, 6 February 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 8 February and *The Leader*, 8 February 1946.



The Congress is willing to concede the right of self-determination to the provinces on the border areas, provided the people of those particular areas so desire. But the Muslim League will not agree to a plebiscite. The leaders of the League will not agree to give the people the right to express their will. They want the British Government to partition India so that the country might remain in bondage for ever. The question of Pakistan can arise only when the country is free. The raising of the Pakistan slogan in a slave country means strengthening the bonds of its slavery. I remind the protagonists of Pakistan that even if Pakistan is established, the British will not quit India and will put forth other excuses to prolong their domination.

The elections will be over within a month, but the fight for freedom will continue. Either India makes a tremendous progress towards freedom in the next two or three months or there will be a terrible blood bath all over the country. If India's freedom is delayed or if any attempt is made to postpone or sidetrack the issues, a big upheaval is bound to come. It is the duty of every Indian to follow the Congress in the fight.

While the Congress has been fighting for freedom other parties have done nothing. They pass resolutions and sit quiet. They have no power behind them. At their best they are capable of creating a few minor disturbances here and there.

The League and the Mahasabha have all these years raised the cry of Islam in danger and *sanatan dharma* in danger, but the fear of both is meaningless. Cowards die many deaths and see danger at every step. Cowards have no place in the struggle for independence. Only the brave and the fearless can carry it forward. Only those who can muster up courage to defend themselves have the right to exist, and if India cannot defend itself, it is bound to fall. The allegation of the Muslim League that if the Congress comes to power it will demolish all mosques is ridiculous. There is nothing in the history of the Congress to warrant such an idea.

It is because of its twenty-five years of struggle that the Congress is today known all over the world. This is the reason why Indonesia, which has a predominantly Muslim population, looks to the Congress, not to the Muslim League, for guidance and help.

The fight of the Congress has won for India the admiration of all Asiatic countries.

India, as it is situated, holds a key position on the map of Asia and this is the main reason why the countries in Asia look towards India for their freedom and for the freedom of the whole of Asia. The British Government does not even relish the idea of my proposed visit to



Burma, Malaya and Java. All my attempts to obtain a passport have failed.

The Congress is fighting for a principle, and not for positions. Whoever is for the freedom of the country should vote for the Congress. There is no other alternative for any Indian.

## 26. Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee<sup>1</sup>

I am glad to hear that Srijut Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee has ended his hunger strike. As I have often said I dislike hunger strikes except perhaps on very special occasions. When there is no other remedy left, a hunger strike may be justifiable.

But this weapon is too mighty to be used except for these very special occasions. A tendency to indulge in it otherwise is unfortunate. I realise however that the lot of political prisoners and more specially long-term prisoners has been a terribly hard one. Some of them have spent the greater part of their lives in prison. Jogesh Chatterjee has, I believe, spent 25 years already in prison. Manifestly from any human standard the normal conveniences for a sane physical and mental life should be provided to them. It is bad enough for vital young men to be kept in prison for all their young lives and any system of government which has to function in this way is a failure. But in any event they should be treated as human beings in bodies and minds which require care and nourishment. Mental nourishment is even more important than physical. None of us dare judge the actions of a person who had had to undergo the agony of long years in prison with all physical and mental consequences that it brings. There is so much talk now of changes in the government and of independence being near. Surely the present Governmental authorities might show some appreciation of the changes that are bound to come soon. They should at least provide healthy quarters for the prisoners to live in, books and newspapers and writing materials and frequent interviews. If they grudge the money for books and newspapers, we shall provide the funds. In particular there are many complaints of living conditions of 'C' class

1. Interview to the press, 6 February 1946. From *The Leader*, 7 February 1946.

political prisoners in Bareilly district jail.<sup>2</sup> It is a small matter which can easily be remedied without any expense or trouble.

2. Fifteen political prisoners in Bareilly district jail were on a hunger strike from the third week of January 1946 in protest against ill-treatment and denial of reading and writing facilities.

## 27. The Congress and Religious Freedom<sup>1</sup>

I send my good wishes to Mr. A. Dharam Das and Mr. G.A. Simon, the Congress candidates for election to the U.P. Assembly from the special Christian constituency of the United Provinces. They are also the nominees of the Indian Christian Association of the U.P. and of the All India Conference of Indian Christians. With all these credentials behind them, they should have been assured of a unanimous election and it is surprising that anyone should have ventured to oppose them.

The larger issues involved in these elections demand that people should vote for the Congress candidates, for that vote is a vote for the freedom and independence of India. Every vote cast against them can only result in encouraging the forces of reaction and India's subjection. The contest is a clear one: for freedom or for foreign rule. Every voter has to answer this question.

From the point of view of the Indian Christian community, it is equally important to line up with the progressive forces for freedom and with the powerful currents of nationalism. Otherwise this community will isolate itself and play no effective part in the new India that is taking shape before our eyes.

I am astonished to read some of the propaganda that is being issued by or on behalf of the opponents of the Congress candidates. This is either due to colossal ignorance or deliberate misrepresentation. The cry of "religion in danger" is used when everybody knows that the fundamental creed of the Congress is freedom of religion, and all that goes with it. Christians form the third largest religious group in the

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 7 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 8 February 1946.

country and it is absurd for anyone to imagine that their religion or their rights can be suppressed or ignored.

This cry of "religion in danger" is the cry of the reactionary everywhere, who seeks to hide his reaction and his opposition to freedom under the cloak of a false and pseudo-religion. If religion is ever endangered, it is done by these exploiters of religion for narrow and low purposes.

I am told that one of the opponents of the Congress candidates applied for a Congress ticket and on his not getting it is now breaking his pledge by standing against the Congress. This is a strange way of holding the banner of truth and religion. One of the opponents is also a former policeman.

The time has come when every Indian, whether he is Christian, Muslim, Sikh or Hindu, has to choose where he stands — for freedom or for continued slavery. Freedom will come anyhow for no one can stop it now. Those who oppose it will not advance the interest of their group or community, but will injure it.

I trust that all Indian Christian voters in the U.P. will vote for Mr. A. Dharam Das and Mr. G.A. Simon and give them an overwhelming majority.

## 28. Revolt if Famine Comes<sup>1</sup>

Let the British Government understand that if there is a famine in this country, the people will not tolerate it. I ask the people to revolt against the Government, if there is a famine in the provinces. The people must refuse to accept the fate which overtook Bengal two years ago, resulting in 35,00,000 deaths. Our countrymen must not die like flies — submitting calmly to death. Let the Government be prepared to face a rebellion.

1. Speech at Bahraich, 8 February 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 10 February and *Hindusthan Standard*, 11 February 1946.



## 29. Interference in Elections<sup>1</sup>

I warn the Government servants not to interfere in elections as popular ministries will soon come to power. I advise the people to resist any attack on their civil liberties.

The foreign administration in the country knows that the victory of the Congress means the victory of the people. It also knows that the victory of the people means the end of British imperialism in India. It is, therefore, making frantic efforts to defeat the Congress at the polls. But the Congress is confident of sweeping the polls in spite of all obstructions. The Congress election programme is part of a gigantic struggle to achieve freedom. It has entered the elections with the slogan of "Quit India." Its aim is not to form ministries, but to win Swaraj.

To win freedom and to abolish poverty are the main issues before the country. Unless Swaraj is achieved, there can be no solution of other problems. Elections will be over within a month, but the Congress struggle for independence will continue. The Congress is determined not to allow the enemies of freedom to enter the legislatures.

The district should be proud of sending one of the valiant fighters for freedom, Mr. Kidwai, from its constituency. Mr. Kidwai was responsible for enacting the Tenancy Bill for the benefit of kisans.

1. Speech at Kaiserganj in Bahraich district, 8 February 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 10 February and *The Leader*, 11 February 1946.

## 30. The Goal in Sight<sup>1</sup>

We are nearing our goal of independence, but we still have to organise our forces for its achievement and bring about a revolution in the country. We have to work for the amelioration of the poor and the down-trodden. We have to work for the uplift of the masses, provide food and clothing, medical aid and educational facilities in order to enable them to lead a decent life.

1. Speech at Zaidpur in Bara Banki district, 8 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 9 February 1946.

Poverty is the main problem facing the country. It is curious that in India the most hard working people get the least comfort while those who do the least amount of work lead luxurious lives. That has led to the present deplorable state of the country. It is for this reason that the Congress has decided to take over the reins of office.

We have to work for the unity of the people, unity between all communities, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others. It is impossible to achieve anything without unity. There are forces trying to destroy the unity of the country to serve their own selfish ends, but it will be the greatest folly if people fall into their trap.

It is wrong to say that the Congress is fighting for the benefit of any particular community. The history of the past 60 years will show that the Congress has fought for the freedom of the country as a whole. Whatever laws the popular ministries in India had made were equally to the benefit of the Muslims and the Hindus. If the ministry has abolished the zamindari system, it is as beneficial to the Muslim kisan as to the Hindu kisan.

The year 1946 is a year of destiny for India. It began well for the country. The voice of the people makes itself felt and even the mighty British empire has to bow to the wishes of the people and has to set free the three I.N.A. officers. The country takes the stand on the plea that it is the right of a slave nation to revolt. That is the stand the country had taken 25 years ago when the first struggle for the freedom of the motherland was launched. It is so because the spirit of India has changed and a new spirit is being born. Be it so, the people of India are neither dead nor alive and a new life has to be infused in them. All doors to progress are closed to them. This barrier has to be removed and all possible avenues to progress have to be opened if the country is to make any progress at all.

### 31. Message of Hope to Villagers<sup>1</sup>

Taluqdars and landlords are the creations of the British Government. They did not exist before in this form. During the last hundred years or so, the British have strengthened the roots of these landlords in order

1. Speech at Nanpora, near Bahraich, 9 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 10 February 1946.

to weaken the country and perpetuate their rule over India. The times, however, are changing. The days of feudalism are now over. India can no longer have a king, crowned or otherwise.

What have the taluqdars done to deserve the vote of the people? Have they done anything to raise their tenants from their present low level? On the other hand, the Congress, while in office, made laws giving tenants hereditary rights over their land. The Congress did everything in its power to improve their lot and it is, therefore, the duty of everyone to give his vote to the Congress.

India is passing through a revolution. A new chapter is being written in the country's history. The people have decided to overthrow the present corrupt regime, which has not only failed in its primary duty to feed and clothe the people, but has also shown a callous disregard for the people's welfare. Freedom of the country is round the corner, and it cannot be much delayed even if the British so desire. Any such attempt on the part of the bureaucracy will be strongly resisted.

India is in no mood to be trifled with. Any attempt to sabotage India's freedom, either from within or without, is bound to fail. The continued miseries of the people, their hardships in obtaining even the most elementary things of life and the oppression by the rich of the poor have convinced the people that they must oust this Government.

## 32. An Old and Feeble Empire<sup>1</sup>

The Congress will have no relations with those who sow the seeds of dissension among the people of our country. They help nobody and prove harmful both to the Hindus and the Muslims. India's poverty is unsurpassed. Where else in the world are the people so helpless and their conditions so deplorable as in this country? At the root of all this misery are the British and their henchmen—taluqdars, rajas and maharajas. It is a shame for the people of India to tolerate such a corrupt and inefficient system.

1. Speech at Balrampur, 10 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 11 February 1946.



The British empire has grown old and feeble and it cannot hold India in bondage any longer, however much the British Government might desire. All these 150 years or so, the British sucked the blood of Indians and robbed them of their wealth to enrich their own treasuries.

Strengthen yourself and strengthen the Congress by voting for it. The Congress will see to it that the corrupt and inefficient administration which was responsible for the death of so many millions of people in Bengal and which is responsible for creating a similar situation here now, dies and dies quick. The British Government is undoubtedly dying, but it is being kept up by its henchmen by artificial means. The people have to take the final step boldly and throw off the yoke.

The Government spokesmen in London and in New Delhi have been talking of an imminent famine befalling India.<sup>2</sup> But have they ever heard of a famine stalking into the homes of the taluqdars, rajas or maharajas? Have they ever seen or heard of a landlord's house without lights? Have they ever seen any landlord going about without clothes? These problems do not exist for them. They are well clothed, and well fed. It is the peasant who suffers. It is the peasant who suffers and dies. It is, therefore, the peasants' outlook and essential duty to throw away their burden and establish a government of their own and steer their destinies as they think fit.

Our patience has reached the limit and it is our determination to wrench completely the reins of the government from the hands of the rulers. The whole situation in the country is highly explosive and it may burst any moment. Hungry India is a danger to the peace of the entire world, and sooner or later the country is bound to revolt against the present unsatisfactory state of affairs.

I warn the officials who degrade the canons of justice and interfere in the elections on behalf of a certain political party. They should not forget that action against them will be taken, when the time comes, for their misdeeds.

2. Newspapers reported on 1 February 1946 that Government officials were of the view that famine was imminent in Bengal and Madras provinces, affecting 110 million people. On 5 February 1946 the British Food Minister told the House of Commons that India faced the threat of a famine.

### 33. Freedom the Main Issue<sup>1</sup>

The edifice of India's freedom has to be built, corruption and bribery, which are at present rampant, have to be ended, the problems of hunger and starvation have to be solved, the poverty of the masses has to be overcome, the administration of the country has to be brought into line with the needs of the people; and all this can be done only when we become masters of our own fate.

Several forces are at work misleading the people and diverting their energies into wrong channels. We have to use our discretion to distinguish between right and wrong. The Muslim League, which clamours for a partition of India, wants only to weaken the country. Mr. Jinnah openly demands British supervision both for Pakistan and for Hindustan, or in the alternative, continuation of the British regime in the country.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately after the elections, the country will be faced with major issues, and if the British Government fails to rise to the occasion, the people will take over its affairs in their own hands. Solid constructive work must be undertaken to reach the goal. Rule of the people, by the people and for the people, has to be set up. You should not, therefore, waste your energies on petty quarrels, but should canalise them in the right direction. But if we fail to solve our problems we will ourselves die out.

The I.C.S. officers, who claim to be expert administrators, have proved themselves to be a most inefficient and worthless lot. They have played a mean part in bringing about the sad plight of the people. They resorted to repression in 1942, the like of which has not been seen or heard since 1857.

The British Government thought that it would keep the Congress crushed so that the people of the country might remain at their disposal. But Britain today stands disillusioned. The Congress has emerged far stronger from the ordeal than ever before.

1. Speech at Basti, 11 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 11 and 12 February 1946.
2. On 29 February 1944, Jinnah said, "...there would be under the new constitution a transitional period for settlement and adjustment during which time the British authority, so far as armed forces and foreign affairs are concerned, would remain paramount."



The foundations of India's freedom lie deep. But our dissensions render us weak. The British, who came as traders, became our rulers. The old game of divide and rule is still on. Mutual hatred is being created by the interested parties. All possible means are being employed to widen the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims. Critical times are ahead of us and we must beware of mischief-mongers.

Pakistan as envisaged by Mr. Jinnah cannot and will not come into being. Several questions of far-reaching importance have to be considered. What will happen to the minorities in the Punjab and Bengal if they do not agree to live in Pakistan areas? Will the Punjab and Bengal be cut physically into two? Over and above it, while the Muslim League wants the division of India, it also wants the presence of the British troops for its protection. The case will be like that of Iran where foreign troops are stationed, with the result that the country's very existence is threatened. Unless, therefore, our defence is in our hands freedom of the country will be meaningless and we will continue to be too weak to resist foreign aggression. It is for this reason that the Congress passed the Quit India Resolution.

The Muslim League stands for hooliganism and creating trouble. It is knocking at the doors of the British Government and fighting for personal gains. It entirely overlooks the main issue—the freedom of the country.

It is therefore the duty of every Indian, irrespective of caste, colour, creed or community, to vote for the Congress, and every such vote will be a nail in the coffin of the British power which knows only to tax the people and open fire on them according to its whims and fancies.

### 34. On the Threshold<sup>1</sup>

India is on the threshold of tremendous changes. It is restless and fully prepared to wrest power from unwilling hands. On the one hand, India is gaining in strength and, on the other, Britain is growing weaker. When Britain is confronted with its own difficult problems, how can it be expected to solve the mighty problems facing the people of our country—the problems of hunger and unemployment?

1. Speech at Gorakhpur, 13 February 1946. From *The Hindu*, 17 February 1946.



The British administration today is unfit even to maintain its police raj, which knows one duty, that is, of firing on the people in India. The tehsildars, the deputy collectors, *patwaris* and all the relics of the vanishing order, cannot be expected to solve the problems of poverty and unemployment, and the dozens of other problems, without the active cooperation of the teeming millions of our country. The truth of the matter is that the British Government, as it is today, is utterly unfit to rule India, and there can be no peace in our country unless we achieve freedom.

Where, in the context of the problems of hunger, want and sickness, does the communal problem fit in? When we are involved in rebuilding our devastated country, shall we sit down to consider what the proportion of Hindu and Muslim engineers should be, or should we entrust the work to those who will work with efficiency, be they Muslims or Hindus or Christians or members of any other community of India? We have to look at the Indian problems from this angle. Today our major problems have to do with achieving independence and building the country anew. Can the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha tackle these problems? I stagger to think that these problems do not even figure in their programmes. They have not given any serious consideration to them. I ask what they have done during the last 30 years towards solving these problems, except to raise a hue and cry. It is easy for them to sow seeds of discord, but I warn them that the results will be disastrous for the whole of India. Can Hindus or Muslims rule the country on communal lines?

The problem is not a Hindu or Muslim problem as the Leaguers and the Mahasabhaites proclaim. For them the problem is of protecting the zamindari and the taluqdari. In Oudh I found a Hindu taluqdar helping a Muslim taluqdar. These taluqdars and zamindars, who are creations of the British Government, are afraid of a people's government. Today I was shown a handbill which was circulated by Muslim Leaguers, in which some sentences, said to have been uttered or written by me, have been quoted. I am pained to think of the degradation of politics to such a standard that sentences torn out of context are used to exploit the sentiments of the masses. What will it matter if one seat or two are captured by these means? How will it help in solving the gigantic problems that stare us in the face?

Though there has been no important change in the constitutional framework of the country, yet there is a world of difference between what India was three to four years ago and what it is today. We have imbibed inner strength of heart and head, which cannot be suppressed by repression. The problems that demand not only immediate but speedy solution are of poverty and unemployment. Either we solve

them or we perish. The country can no longer tolerate the present state of affairs. We are fed up. The cry of Pakistan at this juncture is a vain cry. If Iran cannot guard its freedom, how can one expect Pakistan or Hindustan to stand alone? I am told some provinces on the frontier may ask for secession. I do not believe in this, but if they are all keen to do so, they may part with pleasure, but I tell them they will have soon to come back to a united India.

All those who have indulged in atrocities against the masses will have to leave this country. There is no place for them in India.

### 35. Resist Police Excesses<sup>1</sup>

Let there be no doubt in the mind of anybody that the Congress will soon be returning to power and police and other officials, against whom allegations of excesses and *zulum* are proved after due trial, will be severely dealt with.

I advise you not to take everything lying down, but to resist police excesses boldly without creating any disturbance.

The police excesses in 1942 are fresh in my memory. Events in the country are moving fast and I cannot guarantee that the police *zulum* of 1942 will not be repeated. But whatever course the future events take, unlawful and corrupt activities of officials will not be tolerated and sternest actions against those responsible will be taken.

I deprecate such slogans as अंग्रेजों का नाश हो।<sup>2</sup> It is foolish to raise such slogans. First of all you must have power to oust them. You cannot succeed by cursing others like old women. You have to achieve a big goal and do big things. You should, therefore, think in a big way and should not use such phrases even for your enemy.

Religious freedom under a Congress regime has been made clear beyond doubt in the Congress election manifesto. Momins, Ahrars, and Jamiat-ul-Ulema are with the Congress, because they know that the Congress alone stands for freedom and brotherhood of all the communities in the

1. Speech at Padrauna, 13 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 15 February 1946.

2. "May the English be wiped out."



country. It is a new India that the Congress wants to build, an India in which the amenities of life will be freely available to all, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, town dwellers and villagers alike.

### 36. Deaths from Hunger Will be Avenged<sup>1</sup>

The Congress has refused to join the food delegation<sup>2</sup> proceeding abroad to secure food for India. How can the Congress agree to join a delegation which will be headed by an utterly incapable person like Sir J.P. Srivastava who, by his actions, has dishonoured the country?

If Congress ministries are formed in the provinces, then with the full cooperation of the people some of our present day problems may be tackled. But no one can forget that formation of ministries is not our only aim. We have to see that the progress of our quit India demand and march to independence is steadily maintained. We can cooperate with the Government in the setting up of a constituent assembly, provided such an assembly is invested with sufficient power to enforce its decisions.

My heart breaks when I remember lean and thin, starved and ill-clothed villagers. In Bengal, while roads were full of bodies of people who died of starvation, Englishmen and some Indians were enjoying dances and feasts in big hotels. There could be no wagons for grains, but special wagons were available to take race horses to Calcutta and other places. Imagine how 35 lakhs of our countrymen died of hunger within so short a time. The famine danger is facing the whole country today, but this time we will not tolerate feasts and dances while millions of hungry people face death. If people die of hunger, their deaths will be avenged.

1. Speech at Varanasi, 14 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 16 February 1946.
2. The Congress refused to join the delegation led by J.P. Srivastava to Washington and London to ask for more imports, as "the responsibility for providing food was the Government's. The British had taken upon themselves the responsibility for defending India, and in the course of doing so had reduced it to famine. The Congress could never associate with the officials who were responsible for the Bengal famine."



### 37. Corruption in the Services<sup>1</sup>

In a recent speech in Oudh, I referred to the extreme poverty of the peasantry. I have seen their lack of food and clothing, their miserable mud huts and the sad condition of their children. They live on the verge of life, with death ever hovering over them. If any misfortune occurs, they will have no power to resist and will die in large numbers. I referred also to the Bengal famine which caused during a few months three and a half million deaths. I told the peasantry not to submit to this misery. If starvation stared them in the face, I called upon them to rebel against the political and social conditions which had brought it about. If we have to die, let us die like men and not like rats in a hole. On no account should we submit to dying by starvation. We would also not submit to the condition of some people feasting and racing and flaunting their luxury while the masses suffer the agony of starvation. We would not submit to the incompetence and corruption of highly-placed officers and to the selfishness of profiteers and black-marketeers. If the heavy burden of suffering has to be borne owing to circumstances beyond our control, it will have to be shared equally by all, and the Government responsible for mismanagement will have to go.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 14 February 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 15 February 1946.

### 38. Win or Perish<sup>1</sup>

There is no other organisation, party or body, other than the Congress which can solve the acute problems of the country, and it is this national institution alone, now 60 years old, which can eradicate, when it comes to power, all evils and corruption rampant in the present administration.

All the people who believe in the ideals of the Congress must vote

1. Speech at Allahabad, 15 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 17 February 1946.

for its candidates in the election. For every vote cast for the Congress means voting for the independence of the country. I warn that the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, and similar bodies are constantly standing in the way of the Congress, and their canvassing to win votes aims indirectly at the continuance of the British domination.

I lay emphasis on discipline, unity and a spirit of cooperation among Hindus and Muslims. Then alone can the Indians achieve freedom. There is no intermediary way between Swaraj and foreign domination: either this alien Government of Britain should quit India, or we shall perish. I am not sure whether the British would give independence to India because they have neither the willingness nor the wisdom to do it. It is the common people who will have to snatch power from British hands.

From my extensive election tour in the eastern districts, I have found that the Muslim League is dominated by the upper classes, taluqdars and zamindars. The Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha can never be appealing to the poor masses of the country with their feudatory objects. The Congress represents the people of the country and, by its martyrs and its sacrifices, has won their hearts.

I regret that the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League are sowing seeds of enmity and destruction by preaching communalism and abusing each other. I, therefore, request all, Hindus and Muslims, to unite and increase your strength as early as possible. Hindus and Muslims have lived together for thousands of years and they will continue to live so. Therefore, the task of strengthening their brotherly bonds is the most essential thing.

Pakistan can never be feasible. The demand for it stands in the way of India's freedom. According to Mr. Jinnah, Pakistan presupposes protection by the British troops. Is it not opposed to the ideal of the Congress and the achievement of independence?

### 39. Congress Refusal to Join Food Mission<sup>1</sup>

The food situation obviously requires the fullest cooperation of all in order to avert a disaster, as well as to spread out the burden on all equally. In particular, the cooperation of the public at large is essential.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 17 February 1946. *National Herald*, 18 February 1946.

The question should be tackled without politics, but it is obvious that the tremendous political tension in the country affects that situation and comes in the way of cooperation between the Government and the people.

At no time has the British Government in India been so thoroughly disliked and distrusted by the people as at present. Their handling of the food situation since the war began, and more specially previous to and during the Bengal famine, has been astonishingly bad. Even after the fall of Burma, when the supply of rice to Bengal was cut off, nothing was done. There was no control or rationing in Calcutta or Bengal right up to the time of the famine. Those who are responsible for this, both in the Central Government and in Bengal, have been severely condemned by an official commission of inquiry appointed by the Government of India. Feeling against them is much stronger in the public mind and no one trusts them or considers them capable of dealing adequately with the situation. Yet some of these very men are participating in the food delegation which is going abroad.

It is not possible for responsible Indians to join a delegation which consists predominantly of such people. That would be to flout public opinion and irritate it still more. The only proper way to organise such a delegation is to give it a really national character.

In Britain, in 1940, the Labour Party refused to cooperate in the Chamberlain Government in spite of the stress of war and their earnest desire to help in that war. They felt that they could not accept that leadership and insisted on a change. When that change came and Mr. Winston Churchill became the Prime Minister, Labour joined him.

In India, the situation is far more difficult and unless a change — and a vital change — takes place, effective cooperation is impossible. Even if some individuals were prepared to give this cooperation, they could not carry the people with them and the necessary psychological atmosphere for a combined effort could not be produced.



## BENGAL

### 1. Message to Bengal<sup>1</sup>

On coming to Bengal after three and a half years my first feeling is to offer my salute and homage to Bengal's dead — dead due to famine and starvation, man's incompetence and inhumanity, and done to death by police and military; also my salute and greeting to the living Bengal, especially the youth, vibrant and full of passion for India's freedom. *Jai Hind.*

1. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7 December 1945.

### 2. Need for a United Front<sup>1</sup>

It is not the proper time to make a speech. We all attended the prayer meeting and after prayer there is no room for any speech. I am late in reaching the place, otherwise I would have been one of you in the congregation.

I am glad to meet many old friends and contact many new friends in Bengal. I know what happened in Bengal and what should have been done for Bengal and what had not been done for Bengal. Bengal had to make great sacrifices and suffer terrible agony. I feel ashamed that I could not come to Bengal earlier. Nevertheless, Bengal has extended me a welcome.

The time has come when we should forget our squabbles and turn our attention to the fundamentals and prepare ourselves to tackle the big problems awaiting solution. Elections are always a tough work, but they pale into insignificance in the presence of the fundamental issue, namely, the freedom of India. We have to put up a united front for the

1. Speech at a prayer meeting, Sodepur, 7 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 December 1945.

realisation of freedom and so there ought to be no room for petty issues in our midst.

We plan to build a new India, a new Bengal, for our children to enjoy all the amenities of life. Let them not be dragged into the mire of party squabbles and thereby frustrate this ideal.

### 3. Pulsation of New Life<sup>1</sup>

The meeting began in a well disciplined way. The salvation of India will not come by your mere asking. It will have to be won by disciplined effort. Therefore, if you cannot maintain discipline in this gathering how can you expect to achieve independence. I hope you will disperse quietly after the meeting is over and will not jostle.

I have been in Calcutta only for a few days. I understand that there was a very big gathering along the Harrison Road on the day of my arrival. I did not know that. There was a very heavy crowd at the Howrah Station and I had to detour. So I was unable to come along the Harrison Road and could not meet those who had waited. For this I beg to be excused.

It is three and a half years since I came here last. During this period many things have happened. The world has undergone tremendous changes, so also India. Bengal specially has suffered heavily. When we were in Ahmadnagar Fort we heard of the deaths of lakhs of people due to famine. Other things also happened here. I was very anxious to come to Bengal and desired to tour the province and see with my own eyes how the people had suffered. But circumstances were too strong against my desire. I shall have to leave Bengal in a few days. I want to go to Midnapore at least, but even this would not be possible this time.

If in two or three months, when the elections are over, the Labour Government does not offer anything concrete India will have to take a very big step. But the question before India is no longer how to win Swaraj. Swaraj is not very far. The question is how we fare today.

1. Speech at Calcutta, 10 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 December, and *National Herald*, 12 December 1945.

We will have to be prepared for tomorrow. You would have heard and read in history the rise and fall of a country. Every country moves forward in the light of its own experience. During the last three years India has learnt the lessons which would not have been possible for it to learn from the pages of history.

During the last six months, I have toured different parts of India. I have been to Bombay, to Poona, to Rajputana. I have witnessed a tremendous political awakening among the people everywhere. I have never seen such consciousness among the people during the last 25 years. Having seen all these I am in a position to say that India is pulsating with a new life and vigour. What happened in the recent Calcutta firing is not an isolated instance. Nobody was aware that there was a ban on processions to Dalhousie Square. When the students were stopped they simply squatted on the ground. They were peaceful all through. I did not know the details of what happened until I came here. Bullets were showered upon them again and again. The students faced the bullets quietly. They did not move a single pace and demonstrated admirable courage and patience. Then the whole city was ablaze in indignation and various incidents followed. The students of Calcutta gave a lead to the entire people. Those who took part in this uprising are great.

Propaganda against India is being carried on in America. An American magazine reported that a hand grenade was thrown at a Thanksgiving dinner.<sup>2</sup> We all know that this is a tissue of falsehood. So long as India is not free we will not be free to check such false propaganda. But one day India will be free and we will welcome the friendship of other countries. India will not forget then how to check such malicious propaganda.

The Congress never desired to have a house divided against itself. There is certainly a difference between the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party. The Congress is pledged to socialism. We also want to have friendship with Russia. But the Communist Party took a different attitude so far as India's struggle was concerned and they leaned on the other side.

No doubt, in Bengal the Communist Party did some good work during the famine. But this is not the crux of the whole matter. The Communist Party members who were in the Congress were given time

2. It was alleged that during the disturbances in Calcutta in November 1945, three U.S. army officers were killed. Subsequently, the U.S. authorities contradicted this report.



to explain their position. The simple question before them was whether they accepted the Congress principle. Instead of answering this simple question they replied that the Congress itself is not abiding by its principle. The Working Committee will have to reply to this point.

Do not attach importance to threats<sup>3</sup> by British Ministers or high-placed officers, but go on building up your strength peacefully. Such threats will not provoke us to resort to violence, nor will they be able to deter us from winning Swaraj by nonviolent means. The days when people were frightened by threats from high quarters are over. India is ours, so our voice must prevail, if not today then tomorrow. I can understand Gandhiji talking of nonviolence, but how could the British Government talk of nonviolence? British history shows that Britain built up her empire by violence and maintained it by violence. India is entitled to resort to violence for the attainment of freedom if she so desires. But the people should remember that India cannot throw away its century-old traditions. Throughout its history India has never been an aggressor. It has not robbed any of its neighbours of their freedom. I urge young men to build up strength and organisation. Sporadic violence only fritters away their energy.

Swaraj is meant for every person. I am convinced that we shall be able to give food, clothes, shelter and work to everybody in a free India.

3. On 4 December 1945, Pethick-Lawrence warned that the Government of India would resist any attempt to resolve the constitutional issue by force. On 10 December 1945, Wavell said that India's political freedom was not a simple problem to be resolved by slogans, such as Quit India, and "it cannot and will not be resolved by violence."

#### 4. The Unity of Purpose<sup>1</sup>

I am surprised at the importance being placed on these talks.<sup>2</sup> Nothing of importance can be expected to develop until the elections are over.

The talks are more of an exploratory nature in which Congress leaders have presented their views on the political situation. Soon after

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 11 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 December 1945.
2. Mahatma Gandhi had talks with R.G. Casey, Governor of Bengal, for four days in December. Later Maulana Azad, Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal had interviews with the Governor.

the elections a constituent assembly must be convened to outline the framework of an Indian government. I feel that the people of India will not countenance delay. The thermometer of Indian spirit is rising rapidly, and it is difficult to keep it from breaking.

In my election tour, I have been impressed by the spirit which has caught the people, not only in the large cities like Calcutta, but in backward parts of the country. It indicates that the unity of purpose has reached a high pitch.

My trip to Calcutta has been most revealing. I have never seen such crowds at meetings as the one on Saturday at Deshpriya Park where a crowd estimated at between five and seven lakhs had gathered for an inaugural meeting of the Indian National Army Week. It had been proposed to hold two meetings in widely separated sections of the city in order to avoid the large gathering at one place.

I believe that the British Government will be leaving India soon, but one cannot attempt to set a definite or approximate date.

Question: What is your reaction to the statement made in London by Pethick-Lawrence to send a Parliamentary delegation to India to study the political situation?

Jawaharlal Nehru: What is there that they do not already know about India?

I have been deputed by the Congress Working Committee to visit Burma and Malaya to inquire into conditions of Indians there. I am ready to go as soon as the Government permits me. Despite the elections, I am ready to visit America too and I have presented my passport for renewal. A trip to America will not be possible for several months because of pressing problems here which need my attention. India is on the verge of a great industrial expansion. The country will be looking to the United States for technical advice and financial assistance. The unshackling of sterling balances, for example, is important to the economic growth of India.

In the wake of independence, political, social and economic upheavals might take place during the formative stages, but it is my belief that they can be settled peacefully. I have my own ideas about India's economic and social development which I would present at the proper time.

As America is interested in world peace, it will turn to India for support. India will become an important power in world politics. America is a realistic country and will take a realistic attitude towards India.



## 5. The Right to be Impatient<sup>1</sup>

I apologise to you for having kept you waiting for so long. The train was delayed owing to crowds at every wayside station. I could not sleep in the train and I feel now very tired. If in the course of my speech I fall asleep you should forgive me.

During my Assam tour and on my way back to Bengal, thousands of people had gathered to hear me. I have seen the same scenes in Bombay, Poona and at other places, even in remote Rajputana. I wonder what it is due to. It seems to me to be an elemental phenomenon. If this mass awakening can be focussed to politics, then the independence of India cannot be far off.

There have been questions in Parliament and reports in the press that I am creating trouble by exciting speeches. It has been even suggested in some quarters that I should be arrested.<sup>2</sup> But, as a matter of fact, I move from place to place and stay at a particular place only for a short while. When the people are already excited it is not possible for anyone to create excitement in them.

The war that has ended had lasted six years. The British, the Germans, the French and other people who were participants in it underwent untold miseries. But this was only for six years. In India, the people have been undergoing the same suffering for some 150 years because of subjection to the British. Now let me not refer to the 150 years of British rule or even to the last 25 years. If you take into account what had happened during the last three years in Midnapore, Ballia and Azamgarh, you will get an idea of the rampant repression and the people's resentment. The suffering and patience of the people had reached the maximum limit. It was said that the British lost control of themselves. If so, then we too, certainly, have the right to be impatient. We have the right to be furious. We cannot tolerate foreign rule any longer. That is why we have taken to the Quit India slogan.

1. Speech at Calcutta, 21 December 1945. Based on reports in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 23 December, *National Herald*, 23 December, and *The Hindu*, 23 December 1945.

2. There was a rumour at this time that the Governor of U.P. had threatened to resign if his Government was not permitted to arrest Jawaharlal. On 15 November 1945 the Under-Secretary for India denied in the House of Commons that the arrest of Jawaharlal was contemplated.





ADDRESSING A MEETING AT SIMLA, JULY 1945



TALKING TO JOURNALISTS, BOMBAY, 1945

Mr. Brendan Bracken once said that the subject of India had been placed in cold storage.<sup>3</sup> Our duty is to make things so hot that our demands cannot be left unfulfilled any longer. The seething discontent all over the country cannot be kept in check.

We have been pressing for the withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia — a demand in which the Muslim League has also joined. But overriding the demands of the 40 crores of Indians, Indian troops are still there. India has been openly insulted. In the case of the members of the Indian National Army the whole country is demanding their release and even the armed forces do not like their trial. Such disregard of public opinion is not possible in any free land.

Look at Iran. The question of Iran is now a world question.<sup>4</sup> I do not know exactly how things are going on there. But the developments have become so serious that people all over the world are talking of Iran. Our duty is to act in such a way that the whole world will be forced to think of us. I want to be frank and to say straight to you and to the British Government that the bureaucracy should not create such a situation as may not be tolerated by our countrymen.

When the British Parliamentary delegation comes to India, what will it do? The members of the delegation will visit hospitals, schools and villages. They will go about meeting high officials, some of the Congress leaders, Mr. Jinnah, Dr. Ambedkar and even Mr. M.N. Roy. It is true that when people meet, things are made clear and intimacy increases. There are one or two members in the delegation who used to speak for India. If the delegation wants to meet the Congress leaders we would be prepared to meet the visitors in a friendly spirit. But I doubt whether any good will come out of it as the members of the delegation are coming with a fixed idea that India is a country of people holding divergent views and ideologies.

The British Parliament has been ruling over India for the last 150 years, and if it has not been possible for it to understand the Indian mind till now, how can a delegation sent by it do so within a week? I fail to understand how a delegation sent by it could serve any useful purpose. It makes us angry. It is derogatory to my own self-respect as

3. Brendan Bracken, who was Minister of Information in Churchill's Cabinet, said at a press conference in New York on 27 August 1943 that the Indian political issue had been put in cold storage until after the war, but "Britain stands solemnly pledged to India, and these pledges will be fulfilled in every respect".
4. The Iranian Government had asked Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States to withdraw their troops which had entered Iran in August 1941. The U.S. Government immediately recalled its troops but Britain and the Soviet Union were not keen on doing so.



well as the self-respect of the Indian nation that a delegation of this kind should be sent out to India to study the situation. The proposal is a huge joke and a device for shelving the Indian question.

I am just coming from Assam where I saw people suffering from want of food and clothing and children with swollen bellies. When I think of these things I feel that discussions about the constitution — federal or otherwise — are questions of secondary importance. I only think how millions are dying of hunger. We discuss Pakistan when our people are dying. Is this politics? My blood boils when I see such things occur. Why don't the people of Bengal rise up and revolt instead of dying of hunger? Do we think of the real problem? But this much however can be said that if any party has given thought to this question, it is the Congress. For the last 25 years, Mahatma Gandhi, whether right or wrong, has been building up his politics around this question.

The Congress is a national body. It is not a socialist body. Nor can a national body be merely socialist. If you read the Congress election manifesto, you will realise that the way is open for the country to become socialist when it attains freedom. If the manifesto could be successfully put through the people of India will be marching with certain and rapid steps towards socialism. The manifesto has dealt with the questions of land and industry. It says that there should be no middle man between the kisans and the State. This means the end of the zamindari system in Bengal. There is also the plan for cooperative farming. The manifesto says that everyone will be fully compensated. If the country proceeds along this path the result will be a great revolution.

The manifesto also states that industries will be controlled by the State. The key industries, defence activities, public utilities, mineral resources and transport should be under State control. There are other questions such as currency, exchange etc, all of which the state must control for the benefit of all people.

So I appeal to you to read the manifesto carefully. It gives a picture of free India which the Congress has in its view. It indicates how poverty should be removed and how the exploited should get rid of exploitation. Though I do not like elections, I have been moving about the country for the purpose of the election campaign. You should support the Congress candidates. Among the Congress candidates many might not be good men and might not be liked by all. But if one does not like any particular person, he cannot sit down petulantly. I follow and I support him who marches under the Congress flag.

The Hindu Mahasabha is hardly a force to be counted, as has been seen in the Central Assembly elections.<sup>5</sup> There can be no truck with the Muslim League, which is a reactionary body, and which has always opposed the Congress struggle for freedom. Have you ever heard of any manifesto of the Muslim League? It has only one thing to say—Pakistan. It is impossible for it to issue any other manifesto. It can only frighten our Muslim countrymen by raising the false cry of danger to Islam. It never talks of industrial labour, food or agricultural distress. The leadership of the League is dominated by landlords and aristocrats. I regret that when the world is in the midst of a great crisis, and complex problems face us in our own country, we have been talking and quarrelling on such unreal issues as Pakistan.

The Congress has not turned out the Communists. When they have openly opposed the Congress and even set up candidates against the Congress how can we take them into executive positions? Their leader has replied to the Congress statement in an insulting way. Every week their papers abuse the Congress. There are many fine young men in this party. But they do not think for themselves. When the Congress leaders were arrested and the people rose in revolt, the Communists acted in a manner which was anti-national. The Communists now support the Muslim League and their Pakistan demand. The leadership of the League is a reactionary one. How can a revolutionary party attach itself to the reactionary Muslim League? It passes my comprehension. The League is openly opposing India's freedom, yet the Communists associate themselves with it. I urge the kisans and the *mazdoors* to realise the harm the Communist Party is doing to the country. I do not say that if the Communist Party of India is on the wrong path, socialism is wrong. It is not so. Nor have the Communists anything to do with Russia. I believe in socialism. Russia has gone this way, the world might go the same way. We have much to learn from Russia.

India has to take an important position in Asia. Asia cannot remain under Europe for long. We do not want any war between Asia and Europe. But if America and Europe want to keep Asia under them there is no help—war there must be.

On Saturday I shall be leaving Bengal. I am sorry I could not visit all the places in Bengal specially those places which took a great part in the 1942 movement. But I have no option. I ask forgiveness from the people of these areas. I, however, promise to come again.

5. 18 candidates set up by the Hindu Mahasabha for the Central Assembly elections were all defeated, most of them losing their deposits.



## 6. Government by the Common People<sup>1</sup>

The Congress unequivocally has declared in its election manifesto that India will have a full-fledged, free and democratic government of the common people, and that we shall sweep away all obstructions in the way of attaining our objective.

I do not like that people of different provinces should remain in isolation. Wherever I went I found these people working for their respective organisations only and confining their activities to them only. Even in humanitarian work, such as giving relief to the needy, they make no exception. Big cities are to a certain extent the epitome of India, and those who live in them should cultivate an all-India outlook. For instance, if you make a miniature Punjab here, it is a sad phenomenon when our objective is to build on a broader base a strong and democratic India.

I understand that the number of people likely to become unemployed is about 10 million. We have got to face the post-war reconstruction problems and we must face them boldly and squarely.

1. Speech at a reception by the Punjab Seva Samiti, Calcutta, 22 December 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 23 December 1945.

## ASSAM

### 1. What the Congress Stands For<sup>1</sup>

I am going to Assam after three and a half years. On the last occasion when I visited Assam, India was on the verge of a possible invasion, and the position of Assam was specially critical.

1. Message to the people of Assam issued from the Assam Mail, 12 December 1945. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14 December 1945.



Those years have passed, with horror and suffering of which Assam has had its full share. The war is over, but our struggle for freedom continues and must continue till India is independent.

I like coming to Assam, because the people there are sturdy and courageous, and because the combination of mountain, forest and river attracts me greatly. So I am looking forward to this visit, though I regret that it is going to be a very hurried one.

For the present, I am coming on account of the election. What the Congress stands for in this election and after, has been made clear in its manifesto. It stands for freedom, unity and democracy, specially for the common man, whether he is a worker in the field or factory. More specially, Congress stands for the vast number of our village folks and for those who have been oppressed.

The manifesto makes special mention of the tribal areas. Often enough we had forgotten these brave men and women of India, but it is time now that we should remember them and help them in every way to raise them to a higher level.

We are on the eve of taking great decisions, and we must take the decisions unitedly, and with strength and courage. Only the Congress can do this, and, therefore, it is upto everyone to support the Congress.

## 2. The Pledge of the Congress<sup>1</sup>

Swaraj is not far off and the Congress alone can bring it. The Congress is pledged to develop the resources of the country and to increase the people's standard of living by widespread industrialisation and by solving the problems of unemployment, education, sanitation and agriculture.

After passing through an ordeal of oppression, suppression, death, misery and starvation since August 1942, India has made great advances in its fight for freedom. It is the duty of the people to strengthen the Congress which, unlike other communal organisations, stands for the establishment of a people's raj. It is not unlikely that the Congress will be again faced with a struggle against the British Government.

1. Speech at Barpeta, 13 December 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 December 1945.

The Indian National Army has captured the Indian heart. The communal unity in the I.N.A. cemented its members into a brotherhood which is a noble example for Indians to follow.

### 3. Soldiers of Freedom<sup>1</sup>

I am going to Assam. I have a great desire to tour some districts of Bengal, and I hope to do so in the near future.

The Congress Working Committee at its Calcutta session has passed many resolutions.<sup>2</sup> You must have read the election manifesto. This manifesto gives the Congress plan for a free India.

During the last three years or so, the people of India suffered greatly. Lakhs of people in Bengal died of starvation. A government which allows so many lives to be lost for want of food has no right to function any longer.

During the last quarter of this century we have been making efforts to win Swaraj. We have grown in strength as years passed. You show great enthusiasm. But enthusiasm is not enough. We must be soldiers of freedom, and possess all the qualities of a soldier. We must be prepared to act unitedly in a disciplined way. We must not fritter away our energies in small things. India will take very big decisions in the coming year, and we must conserve our energy and be ready for united action when the time comes.

The election is coming and my appeal to you all—Hindus and Muslims—is that you should support the Congress in every possible way. For the Congress is the only organisation that can deliver the goods. Only the Congress has the strength to fight the might of the British raj and nobody else can give you the Swaraj that you love and aspire for so much.

1. Speech at a wayside station from the train in which he was travelling to Assam, 13 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14 December 1945.
2. On 11 December 1945 the Working Committee passed resolutions reiterating the Congress creed of nonviolence, explaining the Congress attitude towards the Indian National Army, condemning Anglo-American policy in South East Asia and deciding to send medical missions to Burma and Malaya.

#### 4. A Bigger Storm Possible<sup>1</sup>

I have been able to sense the pulse of the entire country during my tours, and I can say that no repression by the Government can extinguish the flame that has been kindled in India today. India saw a spontaneous movement in 1942, and the people have gathered much momentum during the past three years. It is possible that a bigger storm may pass over India within the next few years, if India's question of independence is not settled. You have to prepare yourselves for this. I plead for a strong sense of discipline and the strengthening of the Congress organisation as the nation's energy will have to be properly utilised for the freedom movement.

I deplore the policy of the British Government. No national policy has yet been adopted by it with reference to India. I admit that there are good men in the Labour Party, but there has been no change in its policy.

I may explain to you the implication of Swaraj for which the Congress has stood and fought. Swaraj does not mean that with the leaving of the British there will be Indian viceroys and governors, and distribution of loaves and fishes. The Congress wants to establish a democratic government with complete power to the masses to solve their own problems.

The election manifesto presents before the country a picture of the government according to the Congress conception. I hope that the country will entirely be changed during the next 20 years under a national government. The elections also, I may caution you, will not solve India's problem of freedom. Though comparatively unimportant they are significant having a bearing on India's issue of independence. Therefore, voters, irrespective of caste and creed, should vote for the Congress nominees.

Mr. Jinnah is raising the cry of Pakistan while India's main problem of freedom remains unsolved. Pakistan is a catchword of the Muslim League leadership which is in the hands of some higher strata of the Muslim community. The talk of independence by the Muslim League,

1. Speech at Gauhati, 14 December 1945. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 16 December and *The Hindustan Times*, 17 December 1945.



the Hindu Mahasabha and other communal organisations is meaningless because they never contributed anything to the freedom struggle, nor have they fought for the interests of the masses.

The League leaders retard India's progress towards freedom by raising the question of Pakistan. The League sometimes rebukes the British Government, and the Government also now and then utters hard words against the League. But they both stand in the way of independence.

Independence must be obtained through the nonviolent way. It might take a little longer time to win freedom if we adopt the non-violent method but this will make us stronger.

I appeal to all — Muslims, Hindus, tribals, Sikhs and Christians — to cast your votes in favour of Congress candidates in the ensuing elections.

## 5. The Importance of Discipline<sup>1</sup>

The Government has totally failed in its attempt to crush the Congress. This is evident from the people's response to the Congress call. The elections will clearly show the strength of the Congress. The nation has been gathering strength for years past through the different *sangathans* and all these—the *navajavan*, the kisan and the worker — are today merging themselves in the bigger *sangathan* of the Congress.

It was a shock to me to learn that a Congressman defying the decision of the Congress is seeking election. This gentleman is describing himself as the Congress candidate. This is a bluff. I wonder how a person, who was once a Congressman, can indulge in such an act to further his personal interests. The Congress is fighting this election on the issue of independence. Individuals do not count here. Why has disciplinary action not yet been taken against him? Within 24 hours he should have been driven out of the Congress.

If I had the power I would have adopted a new policy and given nominations in other ways. I would have prohibited the submission of applications for nomination by individual Congressmen. The entire selection should be done by committees selecting candidates on the basis

1. Speech at Jorhat, 15 December 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 17 December and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19 December 1945.

of their past work and on their ability to carry on the Congress work in the legislature. If any Congressman submits an independent application, he should immediately be turned out. The Congress is an organisation where sacrifices are the only qualification for a person to be a Congressman. We need proper organisation and discipline to win Swaraj and establish the people's raj.

## 6. Delhi Chalo<sup>1</sup>

*Delhi Chalo* means that we shall make Delhi respond to the popular will. The world has changed with the passage of time. In August 1942 the Quit India Resolution was passed. It enraged the British Government, which arrested Gandhiji, the members of the Working Committee and thousands of Congressmen. The people rebelled and the Government resorted to unthinkable repression. We talk of the repression by fascists in Germany and Italy and Japan, but nobody knows yet the full measure of suffering of the people in India due to severe repression. The British imperialists thought that by arresting the leaders and showering bullets on the people, they could crush the Congress. In fact they had declared that they would not release the Congress leaders till the Quit India Resolution was withdrawn. What was the result? The Congress did not withdraw the resolution, and yet the leaders had to be released. Instead of the Congress being crushed it has grown in strength and is now fighting the elections on the same Quit India slogan. The Congress will stick to it till independence is won.

The question remains as to how freedom is to be achieved. India today is a vast storehouse of explosives. The temperature is rising. We are anxious to have freedom, if it is possible to get it by peaceful negotiations. If, however, no step is taken in the right direction there will be an explosion. Asia today is in a conflagration. Java, Indo-China and other oppressed countries of Asia are fighting for their freedom. Can India remain idle? The Government repression is still going on.

1. Speech at Sibsagar, 15 December 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 17 December and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19 December 1945.



The British Government does not want that the Congress should win in the elections. It would be glad if victory goes to the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Communist Party. Those who fight the Congress, fight against independence. The Congress belongs to the people, and not to any community or interest. It is a big panchayat for all classes, creeds, and communities aspiring for independence. It is the rallying ground for all so that complete independence might come for all. Two or three years hence, there will be no British raj here. Nor will there be any Hindu or Muslim raj, but a raj for all. I cannot visualise the structure of the Congress after the attainment of Swaraj. That will be for the people to decide. The Congress stands like a rock to fight imperialism and establish Swaraj. After the attainment of Swaraj, there will be a total change of outlook. Flattery and corruption will cease, and rajas or maharajas or other men now at the top will have no place in the administration of the country. The country will be ruled by representatives of the people. It will be then possible to solve the communal problem without the aid of a third party. Where will the people, who now depend on the agents of British imperialism for favour and position, go? Will they go to the Congress for privileges?

Communal organisations like the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Ahom Sabha<sup>2</sup> of Assam do not speak in the name of democracy. They want to cut away from the mainstream of nationalism and are weakened thereby.

I am convinced that, when India becomes free, it will not require much effort to solve the communal problem. I am sure the Congress will not seek the help of a third party to solve the problem.

From the North West Frontier Province to Rameswaram, from the farthest end of Assam to the other end of India, the Congress has a permanent place in the hearts of the people of all classes and religions. Why is the Congress so strong? It is strong because it belongs to the people and does not move at the will or desire of a few leaders. It is the people, not even the Mahatma, who run the Congress. India will change after Swaraj is won. The need for discipline and organisation is of great importance.

2. Ahoms belong to the Shan branch of the Tai family, who came to Assam from Burma in 1228 and ruled in Assam till 1826. They sought special treatment and safeguards in a new constitution.



## 7. Tests for Selection of Candidates<sup>1</sup>

While we witness a complete breakdown of the morale of the Japanese, the Germans and the Italians after their defeat, the strength of the people of India has not broken down in spite of oppression. The reason lies in the fact that they are fighting peacefully and nonviolently. In spite of 150 years of British rule the British have not been able to understand the character of the Indian people. This is so because they live completely isolated from the people.

The Government in this country must be changed lock, stock and barrel. A new India is to be built on the foundation of democracy.

I give two tests by which you should select candidates and vote for them in the coming election. They are: first, is he on the side of the people and second, is he in the organisation which fights for freedom and people's raj. There is no organisation other than the Congress which can satisfy these two tests. We do not want any fresh bloodshed if the British Government wants to settle the question of independence by negotiations. But if it does not take right steps immediately after the elections are over, India will take a very big step.

1. Speech at Dibrugarh, 15 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17 December 1945.

## 8. The Result of the 1942 Movement<sup>1</sup>

I deprecate the time-worn Indian custom of touching one's feet in expression of love and respect. India now wants her sons to stand erect and become soldiers of freedom. India has had enough of stooping low.

1. Speech at Nowgong, 15 December 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 December 1945.

Indians should not lament over the loss and suffering experienced during the 1942 movement. Thousands of young men in other nations died for their own countries. The 1942 movement has advanced the cause of India. In the province of Assam, even a girl preferred to face bullets to making over the national flag she was carrying.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the Indian National Army lies in the fact that it could unite the Indians, though it is far away from the British grip, outside India. If the British leave India, it will be easy for Indians to unite.

I appeal to the people of Assam to cast their votes in favour of the Congress and Jamiat Ulema candidates in the ensuing elections.

2. On 20 September 1942, at Gohpur in Darrang district, Karokhota, a young girl leading a procession in an effort to hoist the national flag on the police station was killed.

## 9. Swaraj for the Oppressed<sup>1</sup>

Swaraj is most needed for those who are oppressed by society as well as by alien rule. The Congress will not accept any policy which will affect in any way the interests of the oppressed people. The Congress stands for the *mazdoor*, the poor and the depressed. Our aim is to win Swaraj so that everyone of you gets food, cloth, shelter and all other opportunities to play a part in raising the status of India in the world.

So long as Swaraj is not won poverty and misery will continue. The Congress which is going to win Swaraj is strong today because the poor, the suppressed, and the fallen lend their support to it.

Swaraj will not be a Hindu or Muslim raj, but will be a raj for all without distinction of caste, creed or community. Black marketeers and profiteers have reaped a rich harvest when thirty five lakhs of people died of starvation. The condition of the workers is also the worst. This happens because we are not free.

The British Government wants to rule by dividing the people. We must unite to frustrate this game. The Hindu Mahasabha or the Muslim League is not for the poor.

1. Speech at Nazira, 16 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17 December and *National Herald*, 19 December 1945.

Everybody has the liberty to follow his religion, but when people starve and die, religion does not come into the picture at all. The whole question is a question of economics.

The Communist Party indulges in tall talk that it will do this or that. Nobody can do anything to raise the standard of the people until freedom is won. Moreover, the Communists have left the Congress and are fighting the Congress, which is the only organisation capable of fighting the British raj.

I exhort the Nagas to support the Congress in every way and also to vote for the Congress candidates in the election.

## 10. The Feudal Demand for Pakistan<sup>1</sup>

I am interested in the references in the addresses given to me to the coming changes in India. I have been asked to give some kind of assurance, some kind of a picture of things to come. I am not in a position to give you any assurance. I can tell you how I feel about a particular matter, and I do so without any restraint. As for giving assurance the idea proceeds from some wrong analysis of the present and the future.

It is true that there is going to be a big change in India which will not stop with the British power withdrawing and Indians ruling themselves by their elected representatives. This change will profoundly affect the entire economic and social structure of the country.

The present structure of the Government is not meant for democracy. It has been built up to suit a certain form of bureaucratic rule. It was originally meant for what is called a police state, that is to say, a state in which the government's functions are directed entirely to the raising of taxes and to running civil and military establishments. It is not so much concerned with the social development of the people. When I say social development I use the expression in a large sense.

The police state is an institution of the past which continues still in India. Of course, during recent years, the Government of India and

1. Speech at Shillong, 17 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21 December and *The Hindu*, 21 December 1945.



the provincial governments have occasionally dabbled in schemes of social development. But these are so small that it requires some kind of microscope to find them out. They have been partially worked out or not worked out at all.

The Government of India is really a police state because it acts most efficiently when it takes police action. It does not function satisfactorily in other departments such as agriculture, industry and social services. The civilian part of the Government, though called civilian, is essentially a department of the police state.

We hear about planning for industrial and agricultural development. I am told that the Assam Government has also a five-year plan. I do not know the plan and therefore I do not criticise it.

From my long experience with the Government in India, I have come to two conclusions. One is that the Government knows nothing about planning and another is that its planning has nothing to do with execution. What is really planning? In planning for national development, one must consider interrelated factors and set before one some objective and some goal. But most of the plans drawn up by the Government are not at all really planning.

A national government cannot function as a police state. It will inevitably be interested in the social development of the people. Therefore, it will be completely different from the present government. It will certainly be different in its personnel and also with regard to its very structure.

The future structure of India will obviously be purely democratic and not autocratic. I am interested in creating conditions that will provide employment for everybody. I want India to plan for this and I am personally convinced that it could be done with a fair measure of rapidity, given the people's cooperation.

After all, if India is going to be a democratic state the people themselves will decide what is to be done. I may not be there, or they may not like my planning. But I would like to say something about one or two matters.

You have mentioned about the Khasi community. It is a small community. But the fact that it is a small community does not mean that it should be ignored. It becomes rather more important that the smaller a community is, the more should be the interest taken for its protection. It is important from many points of view. One of them obviously is that it adds to the richness and variety of the country's culture.

The Congress has long ago very clearly stated its policy on the question of minorities. The meaning of minorities is not to be understood

here in the religious sense. The Congress position is that the smaller communities should be protected in every possible way.

Of course, the ultimate protection is to leave them to protect themselves. I am quite sure that the largest amount of autonomy will be given to every distinctive group. It is difficult for me to say beforehand what that quantum of autonomy will be. At the same time, it should be understood that smaller communities cannot by themselves undertake larger economic development. They must be tagged on to larger groups in these matters. But there is no reason whatsoever why they should not enjoy complete autonomy in the matter of cultural development. The Congress thinks of the future of India in terms of a federation—a democratically elected federation consisting of autonomous provinces. The greatest possible amount of autonomy will be given to the federating units. Within this unit there will be smaller areas. Some subjects like defence, tariffs, currency and communications will be drawn up as minimum federal subjects for units to agree to if they were to federate. Then there will be a second list which will be an optional list of subjects for each unit to accept or to reject. It will be left to them to choose.

Besides this, it is obvious that if a certain part of the country, especially the part which is so situated near the frontier and which can be separated really and ultimately, wants to go out of the federation, nobody is going to stop it with force of arms. A progressive and strong India can only be built up, not with conflicting and warring units, but with units willing to act in cooperation with one another.

It is also expected that within the provincial units, autonomous units, composed of people of distinctive groups, will be set up. These smaller units will be given autonomy to shape their lives as they like. The whole point is that we want to give the fullest measure of freedom to the individual and to every distinctive group of people within the large framework of the nation.

But it should be remembered that, in these days, nothing can be done on a small scale. Indeed one of the objections to the proposal for Pakistan is that it reduces the capacity of India for large-scale operation of economic development. If we want national planning, all units of the country will have to work together, and we shall have to go together.

There are tribal areas in Assam and in other parts of India which are backward and which need a great deal of assistance from the Government. The Khasis are a people quite capable of looking after themselves culturally, but not in the economic sphere. Their community is too small. Naturally they will have to be given the largest protection, so that other people may not come from outside and exploit them. But



I would like to emphasise again that it may not be possible for them to have the same type of growth which may be possible in India as a whole because they are small in number. This is the reason why the Government should make special efforts to raise the standard of life of these tribal people. I would however add this that I would not like to impose upon them the same type of growth which may perhaps be adopted by the rest of India. My point is that the Government should and must have a special department to deal with the tribal people to protect them and help them to grow.

If a particular part ultimately and deliberately, and not at a moment of excitement, wants to cut itself away from India and if the secession is practical, it will be allowed to do so. I say practical because, if suddenly a province situated in the heart of India, say the United Provinces, wants to go out of the federation then it becomes an absurd proposition. But at the same time, I believe that it is frightfully dangerous to cut up India. In the present world conditions small nations have no place. There is Iran, but she is completely dependent on other nations. After all, India wants to be independent and not to depend on any other nation. India will be prepared to cooperate with other nations on an equal footing. By the splitting up of India there is no shadow of doubt that Pakistan cannot retain any real freedom. The rest of India might yet be strong.

Therefore, I have been resisting this talk of Pakistan, and propose to go on resisting. It is harmful from all points of view.

Mr. Jinnah has talked of Pakistan in terms of the whole of the Punjab, Delhi, the Frontier Province, Assam and Bengal. That of course is just fantastic. It has no meaning at all. Mr. Jinnah also talks of self-determination. Self-determination is not as easy a thing as it looked at one time. If the people of a territorial area really want self-determination, let them have it. I do not know if the majority of the Muslim population in India really want Pakistan although at moments of excitement they may shout for Pakistan and even vote for it. I am convinced that in cooler moments they will vote against Pakistan. Pakistan inevitably means cutting up of Bengal and the Punjab into two parts.

Obviously, Sikhs and Hindus, at least, do not want Pakistan. The Muslims, if they want it, can only have it in those areas where they are in absolute majority. Both Bengal and the Punjab are compact and culturally united provinces. It will be a tragedy if these two provinces are cut into two parts. I am convinced that there is hardly a single Muslim Leaguer in Bengal who wants the division of his province. So also is the case in the Punjab. So by raising the slogan of Pakistan you put the people into a dilemma. When the time comes for taking the



final decision, the Muslims may well vote against it. I am again convinced that even if they take a wrong decision now, they will return later to the fold of Indian federation.

There has not been the slightest attempt on the part of Mr. Jinnah or the Muslim League to explain anything or discuss anything. It is astonishing that such a prominent organisation should refuse to explain what it means and to discuss what it wants. It just amazes me. Obviously, there must be something wrong about this organisation. I heard from a leading Muslim Leaguer that if they defined Pakistan, it would create division among their own ranks. Secondly, as soon as you try to define Pakistan, you are faced with the difficulties I have mentioned earlier. Are you going to accept Pakistan and set up independent states where Muslims are in a majority and cut up Bengal and the Punjab? Are you going to compel a large number of non-Muslims to join you and live in that Pakistan against their will?

Even before the question of Pakistan cropped up — it was only seven years ago when I was President of the Indian National Congress — I repeatedly asked Mr. Jinnah to explain and hold discussions with us on what he wanted. Mr. Jinnah did not succeed in telling us what he wanted although half a dozen letters were written. We tried to meet his point of view. He demanded a certificate from us that he represented solely the Muslims of India. We insisted that instead of asking for a certificate, let us have discussions on what he wanted. But Mr. Jinnah was adamant. "No, you must recognise me to be the sole representative of Muslims of India", he would say. It was just impossible to talk with him. The Congress could not agree to this standpoint because if it agreed, it would at once become a communal organisation. The Congress is for the interests of all people, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The Congress tries to think in terms of politics and economics and not in terms of a religion, although the Congress is prepared to provide ample safeguards for the protection of religions.

All these lead me to believe that the fundamental reason for Mr. Jinnah's refusal to explain is that Pakistan is some kind of a bogey or a fiction. The real thing is the fear of a democratically elected government in India. If you analyse the leadership of the Muslim League, you will find that it consists almost entirely of feudal elements and of gentlemen who hold titles and prosper under the British Government. It does not consist of crusaders, or rebels or fighters for freedom. You will find that almost all the leaders of the Muslim League barring Mr. Jinnah have opposed the freedom movement, long before Pakistan was brought into the arena. They opposed the Khilafat movement when

the Muslim masses were fighting alongside the Congress. They considered themselves the pillars of the British Government in India.

These very gentlemen have now strangely become leaders of the Muslim community. They have found it impossible to say any such thing as they used to say during the Khilafat movement. What do they say now? Independence will of course come, they say, but before independence there must be a Pakistan. They know that it is absolutely impossible to get Pakistan in the manner things are in progress. But they must create barriers in the way to free India. So this Pakistan. They know they cannot rally the people on any other slogan. They, therefore, exploit the old sentiments of the people. "Come", they say to the Muslim people, "Islam is in danger. We must have Pakistan."

The fundamental point to be borne in mind is that these feudal elements do not want a change. They are happy today. They have no passion for freedom. They sit on their chairs and continue obstructing India's independence. Pakistan is not really a communal problem, in the ultimate analysis, although it becomes, unfortunately, a Hindu-Muslim problem, as the cry of religion is involved in it. Do you think that the leaders of the Muslim League can go round and say to the Muslims that they must support them for a feudal system? So they have found out a way. The old tactics of exploiting people's religious sentiments is adopted. The cry that Islam is in danger is raised. They succeed in this way by keeping in the background, political and economic questions that affect the people.

So in the last analysis, Pakistan is an attempt of certain feudal elements in the country to stop the progress of India towards a free democratic form of government. There can be no compromise between nationalist India and this type of reaction. Feudal elements exist among the Hindus also. But the Hindu elements have been successfully suppressed.

What happens in this election will affect us, although not fundamentally, because Pakistan cannot come as a result of the election. It can only come, if at all, when Indian nationalism agrees to it. Indian nationalism which is represented in the main by the Indian National Congress will never agree to accept Pakistan in the negative form. In this event, Pakistan will include the areas where Hindus or Sikhs are in a majority.

These feudal elements are a nuisance. It appears the Muslim League leadership and British Government have cooperated to obstruct India's freedom. Things have reached such a stage that delay in the



establishment of India's independence might lead to disastrous consequences, not because some individuals are going to create trouble, but because the people of India are in a terrific mood.

## 11. The Need to be Strong<sup>1</sup>

After the great war, the map of Europe has changed; so also that of Asia whose condition has now deteriorated greatly.

He alone counts in society who has iron nerves and a strong body, and those who lack them are not recognised. The weak and the poor have no place in the world. Big countries like America are recognised everywhere in the world. No one speaks of India anywhere because we are poor and weak though our population is four hundred million. It is only the Congress which has made the country strong and powerful. So you should join the Congress.

Mr. Jinnah is saying that India should be divided into two — Pakistan and Hindustan. Whether Pakistan is a great or a small thing, is a different question. First, let all Indians, Muslims and Hindus, join together in the fight for liberation. When freedom is attained no one will be retained by force in the land. In its resolution of self-determination, the Congress has given the option to any community either to remain or secede. As soon as the British leave India there will be no communal differences. In Indonesia there are Hindus and Muslims. But the authorities are shooting down both of them and burning their houses without discrimination.

The Muslim League is not the sole representative of all Muslims. In the Muslim community there are the Ahrars, the Janiat-ul-Ulema, the Majlis and the kisans. The League consists only of nawabs, zamindars and knights.

When the Congress Ministers kicked office the Muslim League took over power. But what have they done? Millions died of starvation while the ministers filled their pockets and secured jobs for their favourites. When Swaraj is attained it will be neither for the Hindus nor for the Muslims, but for all Indians including the *mazdoors* and the kisans.

1. Speech at Silchar, 19 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21 December 1945.



The British want to crush the Congress. But during the last six months wherever I had gone I found the people stronger than before, displaying the kind of spirit found in free nations. You are to vote for the Congress policy and aims, and not for persons whom you may not like even. If you do not agree that the Congress can solve India's problems, do not vote for it.

When British rulers imprisoned about a lakh and killed thousands by bullets the Communists did not join the struggle, but supported the rulers, with the cry that it was a people's war. I ask you to emulate the chivalry of the Indian National Army in which there were neither the Congress, nor the League, nor the Communists but only Indians without communal differences. Our one aim is to liberate the country from foreign yoke. So we should all be Indians with one aim — the liberation of India.

## 12. The Muslim League Retarding Freedom<sup>1</sup>

The Muslim League is retarding India's fight for freedom by raising the Pakistan demand which is so unreal that the Congress cannot accept it. If the League demand is accepted, Bengal and the Punjab will have to be divided into two. The inhabitants of Bengal and the Punjab will not accept such a proposition.

Mr. Jinnah's claim that the Muslim League is the sole representative of Muslims is not supported by facts as there are several Muslim organisations which are opposed to the League.

Though the Communist Party is working for freedom its present policy is to oppose the Congress and support the League and its Pakistan demand, which is against the interest of the masses.

Our opposition to the Communist Party of India has nothing to do with communism or with Soviet Russia, as communism is good, and I have great admiration for Soviet Russia.

I exhort all to support the Congress candidates and request the Muslims to support Jamiat and Nationalist Muslim candidates in the coming elections.

1. Speech at Sylhet, 19 December 1945. From *National Herald*, 20 December 1945.

### 13. An All India Outlook<sup>1</sup>

Swaraj will come within a year or two, and this will be neither Hindu nor Muslim nor Christian Swaraj, but a democratic government in which the right of everybody will be protected. In the light of the Bengal famine, I would ask my countrymen to drive out any government which could not protect its people.

The Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League are communal organisations dominated by aristocrats and neither of these organisations has contributed anything towards the political movement in the country. The Pakistan cry of the League is an impossible theory. I declare that self-determination must be applicable to all.

I appeal to you to support the candidates set up by the Congress, which is an organisation of the poor, the *mazdoors* and the *kisans*.

1. Speech at Serajani, 21 December 1945. From *The Hindu*, 24 December 1945.

### 14. Impressions of Assam Tour<sup>1</sup>

Assam and Surma Valley, like all other places I have visited since my release from prison, are afire with enthusiasm and excitement and a mighty stir moves the masses. There were vast crowds at the meetings and on the wayside, but even more impressive than these crowds was the light in the eyes of the people and a ringing confidence in their voices. There was no spirit of defeatism in them, but a tone of challenge and hope as at the dawn of a new day after the long night was over. I had the same experience everywhere — in the towns and villages, among the workers of factories and tea gardens. Sometimes they complained of their burdens and sorrows, of their lack of food and clothing. But in the main there was an eager questioning look in their eyes, as of someone athirst searching for water to cool his parched throat. When will Swaraj come? When will freedom be ours so that we may breathe again and be rid of our misery? Bright-eyed young men and

1. Written on the train on way to Calcutta, 21 December 1945. From *National Herald*, 23 December 1945.

women and boys and girls were more definite and insistent and demanded to know what they should do, what next step to take for freedom's sake. There was a brave challenge about it all and an unspoken pledge which warmed the heart and made the blood quicken in the veins.

Assam has the look of great reserves of strength and potential power. It is still an undeveloped province and the future beckons to her. I have no doubt that great highways by road, air and rail, will go across her, connecting China with India, and ultimately connecting East Asia with Europe. Assam will then no longer be an isolated far away province but an important link between the East and the West.

While returning from Assam and the Surma Valley, through north Bengal, vast crowds met me everywhere *en route*. They had not been asked to come. It was an entirely spontaneous effort of theirs. Their excitement and enthusiasm are astonishing. Here and in Assam and elsewhere, as I have watched these mighty gatherings, almost overcome with emotion, I have wondered what all this signifies. There is little personal about it, though the affection they showed me is precious beyond words. There is something impersonal about it, something elemental as of a force of nature moving these multitudes of human beings. What is this mighty force and where is it leading them to? There is a faith in the Congress but above all there is faith in the coming freedom and a hunger and thirst to achieve it soon. For me who have been privileged to witness this, it has been an inspiring sight and a vision of things to come, and I have felt very humble before these masses who have suffered so much and for so long and yet are so buoyant and full of life, vitality and hope.

## BIHAR

### 1. Jayaprakash Narayan<sup>1</sup>

India will continue to be in prison so long as a single patriot remains encaged in a British prison. Those who still remain behind the bars also

1. Speech at "Release Jayaprakash Rally," Patna, 24 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 December and *The Hindu*, 26 December 1945.



continue to serve the country through their speechless messages which are sure to resound through every nook and corner of India. They reinvigorate the people for the still greater fight ahead.

The justification brought forward by a section of the people for the release of Jayaprakash and other leaders is that the war is over and that peace and amity have returned.<sup>2</sup> I express my strong disagreement with this justification as this amounts to begging the authorities for the release. The war might have ended, but our struggle against the British Government will not be over until we win full freedom. Then only we can be sure that valiant fighters who are in jails will not be clapped back into them again. It looks incongruous that on one side we are begging for the release of Jayaprakash and on the other we claim that we are fighting for freedom.

We want Jayaprakash amidst us but with full honour and dignity. The idea of getting his release by begging, neither I nor Jayaprakash, will like. His release depends entirely on you. If the British show reluctance then we shall take the initiative and courage in both hands and see that Jayaprakash and others are in our midst. The situation as it is today, clearly indicates that the release of our patriots is India's concern alone and not of the British. The time is ripe now to create such conditions as to force British hands to open the Indian Bastilles. To achieve this end, it is not only desirable but proper that we have mass power and strength in our rank and file. This will expose the British greed and lust to continue the machine of repression and exploitation of India.

We have every right to demand the release of Jayaprakash and others but it does not fit in with our dignity to say that as peace has been restored, they should be released. We must continue our battle for freedom, and must not cry halt till it is brought home to the British Government in India that it is risky and hazardous to keep Jayaprakash any longer in prison.

Our struggle goes on unabated until our victory is achieved. The release of patriots alone will not give us rest, as India's battle knows no truce. The release is only a healing of one of our national injuries. Our miseries and sorrows will vanish only with the dawn of freedom.

The British have brought three men in open court-martial and the facts about those who have already been court-martialed and hanged are still a hidden story to us. The I.N.A. trial has created a mass upheaval. Wherever I went, even in the remotest villages, there have been anxious

2. Jayaprakash Narayan was released on 12 April 1946, after the arrival of the Cabinet Mission.

enquiries about the I.N.A. men. There are profuse sympathies for these brave men and all, irrespective of caste, colour and creed, have liberally contributed to their defence.

The supreme court for the trial should not be the Privy Council. The deeds of the I.N.A. patriots should have been tried and judged at the bar of public opinion. The verdict will be overwhelmingly in favour of the I.N.A. men. The continuance of the trial is sheer madness undermining the position of the British in this country. The trial has taken us many steps forward on our path to freedom. Never before in Indian history had such unified sentiments and feelings been manifested by various divergent sections of the Indian population as it has been done with regard to the question of the Azad Hind Fauz.

This is not the only and solitary contribution of the I.N.A. trial, but there is also another formidable one and it is that it has broken the impenetrable barriers that separated earlier the Government-controlled Indian Army and public opinion. Before the I.N.A. question came, the Indian people and the Government army lived in watertight compartments. The trial has brought the two closer. It is transparently clear that the Government army also shares the feelings and aspirations of the country. There is not a single soldier in it who does not want the complete severance of British connections and their immediate exit from this country.

Even the prosecuting counsel of the Indian Government has admitted before the Court Martial that these I.N.A. men were actuated by the best motives of patriotism, and were not prompted by any base design.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, he mentioned with all force that they merited less punishment and urged the Court Martial to add a rider to this effect in its judgment.

This is not the main question at issue. The real issue is that the proper court should have been the public opinion, and not the Court Martial or the Privy Council. That the trial however is being continued, despite public agitation, indicates that the masses have not yet gathered as much strength as is required to bring down on its knees the mighty force of imperialism.

I draw your attention to the reprehensible conduct of the Bihar Governor during his recent visit to the Bhagalpur Jail. From the Governor's

3. The counsel for the prosecution said on 22 December 1945: "There is a good deal of evidence to the effect that what the accused did was done by them not with any mercenary motive, but out of what the accused *bona fide* considered to be patriotic motives and impelled by a sense, whether wise or misguided, of doing service to India."



attitude it is clear that imperialism still reigns in its full fury. I deprecate the action of the Governor in meting out humiliating treatment to political prisoners while he had been there to review their cases.

It is obvious that British rulers are at war with their Indian subjects though the world war has ended. There are two warring camps in India now. One of them is the British and the other is those fighting for freedom. Our relation therefore with British imperialism under present circumstances is definitely of armies arrayed in two groups in the battle-field.

There have been different phases in our national struggle, but British onslaughts against our fronts have always been launched in all their fury and vengeance. The tempo of the struggle at times gets fast or slow. But there is no respite, no truce, and our war of independence goes on until we achieve freedom.

By begging, you may secure the release of Jayaprakash but it will be of no use to you as he will again be arrested on some pretext or other. So long as British imperialism is not thrashed into submission there will be no improvement in our situation. In this connection I would recall the dictum of the late Deshbandhu C.R. Das, who said 28 years ago that all the Indian population was in prison suppressed with heavy irons if any of its patriots was incarcerated.<sup>4</sup> I myself feel as if in prison when I find that Jayaprakash and other patriots are pining in jails.

Jayaprakash is a great patriot. Whether in jail or outside a patriot like Jayaprakash always gives forth inspiration and strength capable of shaking the very basis of British imperialism. When the government arrested the leaders on 8 August 1942, it was under the delusion that a sense of defeatism had enveloped the Congress organisation. But to its amazement it found mass upheaval and upsurge. After the repression some misconstrued the silence as a sign of demoralisation and here the Bihar people showed that their spirit remained unflagged and redoubled. The result is that Bihar today is agog with excitement and passion to sacrifice the best at the altar of freedom's fight. Your spirit, instead of being curbed, has increased in magnitude. In modern times the sword alone does not count. It is the force of ideas and of freedom that matters much. Difference in ideologies inside the Congress organisation is immaterial. Every member of the organisation is a fighter of freedom. If he is in jail we are all in prison. We are all brothers in spite of our differences; we

4. In a speech on 31 December 1917 protesting against the internment of Mohamed Ali, C.R. Das said: "Let the whole country be considered as a prison and let us with folded hands tell the Government, in case of every internment, if you intern that man, you have got to intern the whole of India."



must secure the release of imprisoned patriots but with due honour and dignity.

## 2. Enough of Empty Promises<sup>1</sup>

This is my first visit to Bihar after 1940. At the outset I should apologise to you for my inability to come to Bihar much earlier, partly due to my own preoccupations and partly due to the force of circumstances. But, during the intervening period, Bihar always remained in my mind. While I was in Ahmadnagar Fort I did not forget Bihar, and very meagre and isolated pieces of news about Bihar used to reach me through the newspapers. By collating and interlinking these bits of news I could visualise a picture of the events in Bihar. After my release I heard everything of what happened in Bihar and felt the urge to come here, not to express sorrow over the death of martyrs, but to extend felicitations.

Of all the provinces of India, Bihar is on the highest pedestal. I pay my tribute to the Biharis for their participation in the 1942 movement. Those who sacrificed their all and became martyrs in the battle for freedom deserve all honour. The people of Bihar showed conspicuous courage in those fateful days. They did not hesitate to weigh the consequences of what they did, whether their actions would be harmful to them or not. This is most encouraging. It shows that there are people who are prepared to stake their all to uphold the honour of their country. The country, where people know how to kiss the gallows for the cause of liberty, can only claim freedom as the price of sacrifices. A country which possesses such men is sure to be free.

In freedom's march, we have to surmount obstacles and impediments which beset the path. When freedom is achieved we have to keep a strict vigilance against foreign and native tyranny. I am pleased to notice that our people have this ability and are wide awake and fully conscious of lapses. This should guide us all through. Law gives protection only when people enjoy stability and security. Freedom cannot

1. Speech at Patna, 24 December 1945. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 25 December and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 December 1945.

come through either a bargain or through a legal document nor can it descend like manna from heaven. Freedom is a surge of the human soul and one has to pay heavily to attain or to maintain it. So in the battle of freedom vigilance is an inevitable requisite. If vigilance vanishes from the mind at any step of the struggle, the fighting nation is embroiled in something which, in spite of taking it ahead, gets it receded far back. So I warn the nation to remain alert and active, not only now when the struggle for freedom is on, but even after freedom is attained, so that nobody will ever again wrest it from us.

I do not bemoan the events of the August revolution. I am enthusiastic over the fact that the country has emerged victorious and stronger out of the baptism of fire and sacrifices. I find that people have now got an urge to establish their own government.

I have before me the glorious past, but the question of the present should now be the foremost concern. How are we to face the immediate issues which concern the greatest good of the greatest number? Now comes the task left incomplete. How should we act and what should we do for the good of the people? These are the questions looming large over the horizon.

Elections are on and the Congress, having undertaken to fight it, must fight it to the finish. I know well that Congress victory in the elections will never bring Swaraj. I am sure that it will only be a step forward to our goal. Our war of independence will continue unabated till freedom is secured.

In the Commons, Mr. Attlee boasted and bragged that freedom was there for the taking. This is a mere platitude. No reliance can be placed on the assurances given by the British Government. In fact the question of reliance does not arise between a subject nation and the ruling race. The British Government has given the assurance, no doubt, that it is willing to grant independence to India, but it can be taken at its word only if it is supported by action. Indians have had enough of empty promises.

The change of government in Britain has brought no change in its outlook either in reference to India or to the world. The British attitude still betrays the same woodenness and dichardism. This is the old game of British imperialism. Whoever might be at the helm of affairs in England, its only object is to maintain its stranglehold over India and its colonies. This is not the case with India alone, but the same motive is manifested in its behaviour towards Indonesia. To keep up Dutch imperialism the British army is fighting against Indonesian patriots. What else can one expect from such imperialists in the case of India?



picture of the future is not available. If they were held, they will constitute one way of knowing the spirit of the country.

Question: What is your comment on Mr. Jinnah's claim that the Muslim League represents all Muslims in India?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Pakistan has not been defined, and nobody knows what exactly it is. I am personally against the idea of division of the country, but if a representative election of the areas in question is held, and the people in those areas wish to separate themselves from India, then I shall agree to their going. However, I wish to have it made clear that the decision must come from all the people in those areas.

The Quit India Resolution still holds good except for the section relating to civil disobedience and other minor issues. I shall not comment upon the speculation that the Congress will make another show of force, such as the one precipitated in August 1942, should the present deadlock continue.

I would not hazard any guess as to the future, although I think there is a fifty-fifty chance of some sort of Indian Government emerging from the present state of flux. Till now, the British Labour Government has not been of any help, and from the policy it is following in Hong Kong and Malaya it seems that not much can be hoped for India.<sup>2</sup>

The job of returning demobilised soldiers to civilian life will be a big problem even for a national government, and an impossible problem for the present Government. I do not know the extent of political consciousness among the rank and file of the Indian Army, but I believe that even among the rank and file and especially among officers, there is considerable national feeling. I admit that their dissatisfaction comes largely from the differential treatment accorded to them in relation to British officers and men.<sup>3</sup> I may point out that there are serious grievances due to different rates of pay and treatment for doing the same job.

There are reports that I might go to America. While I would like to go there very much, there is still much work to be done in India

2. Britain had imposed military administration in Hong Kong and Malaya following reoccupation in early September 1945 and suppressed the demand for independence.
3. The proportion of the British and Indian officers in the army was 10:1. In January 1945, there were 596 Indian officers in the combatant section and the ratio was 12:1. An Indian soldier's monthly salary was Rs. 25 and that of a British soldier thrice as much. An Indian lieutenant got Rs. 350 and a British lieutenant was drawing double that amount. In the clubs and messes racial discrimination was noticeable.



and I cannot leave. If there is any work to be done in the United States, I would most certainly welcome going there.

## 2. The Elections and the Pakistan Issue<sup>1</sup>

Question: The Congress is for self-determination. Does it mean that the question of Pakistan is acceptable?

Jawaharlal Nehru: No one knows exactly what Pakistan means as it has not been defined by the Muslim League or by Mr. Jinnah. No one can accept something that is not defined. But the principle of self-determination for an area has been accepted by the Congress subject to other groups of people not being dragged in against their will.

Q: Will the present election decide the question of Pakistan if the League secures a majority of seats?

JN: Not necessarily, because in the election there are so many influences. A Muslim voting for the Muslim League may not be a supporter of Pakistan. The proper way is to take a vote on this specific issue.

Q: It is reported that Lord Wavell is returning empty-handed. What is the Congress going to do? Is it going to launch another movement?

JN: Well, I cannot tell you what is going to happen after six months. Let us see what we are going to do now. It is a premature question.

Q: What about the question of demobilisation?

JN: I am sure the present Government cannot tackle it. It is only a national Government which can tackle the question of demobbed soldiers and their re-employment.

1. This represents a conversation between a press correspondent and Jawaharlal when they travelled from Kalyan to Bombay in the same train on 11 September 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14 September 1945.

### 3. Congress Reorganisation<sup>1</sup>

Formation of a government for India is not the only problem facing the Congress Working Committee. Elections to posts within the Congress have not been held for over three years. In the United Provinces alone there are 20,000 elections to be held, ranging all the way from Congress offices in the villages to the provincial committees and to the All India Congress Committee. No elections had been permitted after the Congress was outlawed in August 1942. Moreover there is the question of disciplinary action against the Communists and others who have not followed the Congress policy after 1942. The United Provinces Congress Committee has voted for disciplinary action against the Communists in the Congress who supported the war despite the Quit India Resolution. This purge may take the form of barring the Communists from holding office in the party for a term of months or years. Such a decision will result in the expulsion of a dozen Communist members from the All India Congress Committee.

The Congress Working Committee may also be faced with a new problem if Lord Wavell should announce any new plan on his arrival in India.<sup>2</sup> The current meeting may have to be adjourned till that time, but it will be possible for the Working Committee to meet even on the eve of the A.I.C.C. meeting on September 21 if the announcement makes it necessary that a meeting should be held.

1. Interview to the press, Poona, 14 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 15 September 1945.
2. Wavell returned and announced his proposals on 19 September 1945.

### 4. The Continuing Struggle<sup>1</sup>

After having seen and addressed crores of people in all parts of India, I feel the fundamental unity of the people amidst the diverse customs, manners, dresses and languages. I always try to read the thought,

1. Speech at Poona, 18 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 20 September 1945.

aspirations and hopes of my audience, and realise that they always show great enthusiasm. But mere superficial enthusiasm is not enough or useful. We are passing through a crisis. In fact, the whole world is passing through a critical period. Even after six years of war, no one knows the future of Europe. Many feel that the world is again heading towards another war, because the causes of war are not yet removed. It appears that even the statesmen in other countries have not yet realised this. But one thing is certain, that no country which is ruled by a foreign power will ever be willing to remain under domination. Such a country will be considered as dead. India is not dead. She has shown during the last 150 years that the struggle for freedom will always continue till she is free. We have been hungry for our freedom for a long time, and will not wait more. But we must also realise that our freedom cannot be attained merely by discussions or compromises. We shall have to develop our strength, and build it up through organisation and discipline. It would be childish to think that a few arms could give us freedom. This is the age of the atomic bomb. I would not hesitate to advise you to take up arms, but our real strength lies not in arms, but in fearless and strong hearts and organisation.

The Congress has decided to contest the coming elections, not because the elections will give us freedom, but to demonstrate the will of the people. Elections are merely a temporary phase of our fight. The Congress is the only organisation in the country which is fighting for the freedom of India, and a thumping victory for the Congress will be a notice by itself to Great Britain and the world that India is on her way to freedom and will not wait any longer. Other organisations, particularly the communal ones, can never fight with the British Government because they grow under the shadow of the Government and draw their strength from the Government support. They may give threats, but will never carry them out. All that these communal bodies can do is that they can create internal troubles.

The question of forming Central or provincial governments after the election does not interest me. Even at the time of the Simla Conference, we agreed to do so only with the object of carrying on our fight. But how could we take part in forming such Governments in the present scheme of things when no real power is transferred to us?

While the tendency in other nations is towards a world federation, it is to be regretted that some of our countrymen should think of dividing the country. A free India has a great part to play in a federation of Asiatic nations. Such a federation will form a bulwark of the world federation which alone will be an effective means of guaranteeing world peace.



## 5. Dangers of a Group Mentality<sup>1</sup>

India has a big part to play in the future of South-East Asia and South-West Asia and it can only do so if it is strong and united.

There are very many classes and groups in this country and all of them face different problems. They are very important groups and their problems cannot be ignored. Many of the spokesmen of such groups are worried over the future of their groups. But we cannot think of these problems merely in terms of a particular group.

During the war the country was very badly hit. Now the Government is not capable of handling the problems created by war because of incompetence and because of the existing economic structure.

It is difficult to forecast the exact future structure of India. It may be that there will be a transitional stage, but there is not going to be any halfway house between independence and dependence.

Many countries are passing through a transitional stage and in Europe some of them are passing through the same turmoil as in Asia. The problems that face us are not peculiar to India. These problems are common to the whole world.

1. Speech at Bombay, 23 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 25 September 1945.

## 6. Faith in a Forward March<sup>1</sup>

The eyes of the entire world are, for the last three days, focussed on the momentous All India Congress Committee session here. People have flocked to the session from remote parts of the country. There is evidence of unprecedented national enthusiasm in the activities of the Congress. During the past three years, the country has passed through travails and tribulations. Famines have laid waste entire provinces and killed hundreds of thousands of people. Under the Ordinance rule of the Government, thousands were thrown into

1. Speech at Bombay, 24 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 September, *The Times of India*, 25 September and *The Hindustan Times*, 26 September 1945.

prisons and beaten up. Many places were even bombed, as though we were an enemy country.<sup>2</sup> But the common people have not been cowed down by these acts of repression and terrorism, and they have emerged with a stronger faith and newer hope in the Congress.

The Government, which refused<sup>3</sup> to deal with the Congress till it apologised and retracted from the Quit India Resolution, has changed its mind and now attempts to negotiate with us. The Quit India Resolution still holds the field, and the Congress will never go back on it, as it will mean acceptance of defeat and national degradation. The resolution has the sanction of the people behind it. It shows the resolve of the people to be a free nation. There have been many mistakes on the part of some Congressmen, but there is no instance of any Congressman having staked the honour of the Congress and the country. Sometimes we were slow, and sometimes more dynamic. But we have never condoned repression or lost our faith. The All India Congress Committee in its reiteration of the Quit India Resolution has expressed our resentment unequivocally against Government repression and also our sense of happiness at the fortitude and courage of the people.

When the Quit India Resolution was being passed, the country faced the Japanese menace on its frontiers. At that time the Congress asked the British Government to lay the foundation of lasting world security by declaring India free. But the Government replied by wholesale arrests. It wanted to break the spirit of the nation, but the people took up the challenge.

My initial hope that the advent of the Labour Government in Britain heralded the dawn of a new policy has proved futile.<sup>4</sup> I am afraid

2. During the August movement, there was aerial machine-gunning of crowds at Patna, Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Nadia and Talchar.
3. The Viceroy, in his letters to Mahatma Gandhi and in his public utterances in January-April 1944, had held that the Government was not prepared to talk to the Congress leaders as long as the August Resolution was not disowned by the Congress.
4. The statement of 19 September 1945 that the Cripps proposal "stands in all its fullness and purpose" meant that there was no change in policy. Indian troops had been employed by the Labour Government in Indo-China and Indonesia in the same way as the Conservative Government had done. It had also refused to reduce export prices for India when India sought it as a control for purchases during the war.



that the common people of England, who have brought Labour to power, have no influence on the foreign policy of their Government. We ourselves cannot exercise such an influence unless India takes up the initiative and continues the struggle. I am of the opinion that it is a wrong policy to pin one's faith on any type of government which comes to power in Britain. The release of the leaders does not mean anything. We would have been released anyhow when the war ended. Under such circumstances it is unwise to relax. For the British Government now knows that the Indian problem cannot be solved without the Congress.

The resolutions of the Working Committee passed at Poona and the latest resolutions of the All India Congress Committee define the Congress attitude to national and international questions. We have reiterated the Quit India resolution and resolved anew to strengthen the Congress as a militant and dynamic organisation. While so many patriots are still in jails, there is no time to relax or to cry halt. Whether the Labour Government is sincere or not in its offer to India, the Congress, as the voice of the nation, has to assess, from time to time, the strength it derives from the people and assess also how far the voice of the leaders has reached the people. But from what I have seen in the course of my tour of the various parts of the country I have no doubt that the strength of the Congress has enormously increased. The presence of people in such large numbers at this meeting is an index.

What India demands is not self-government within the empire, but complete independence, which means not only the freedom of a few top men or a few favoured communities, but the freedom of everybody including the workers and the peasants. We want to establish a freedom in which the workers and the peasants have a voice. To those who harbour any doubt about the Congress policy, I would say that the moment India wins its freedom, the Congress would have fulfilled its mission for which it has been striving for 60 years. The gigantic task of educating the people, reconstructing the country socially, economically and industrially, in different ways will commence. So long as the stamp of a foreign government continues this cannot be undertaken. Independence will open the door for individual and national progress by which alone can India march forward.

The attitude of the British Government towards Indian interests is callous. This is very much in evidence with regard to the sterling



balances of India which have accumulated in England. These balances represent the blood and sweat of the workers of India.<sup>5</sup>

The British form their own committees and include some Indians as figureheads and try to impress the world that the Indians are one with them in all their actions. Millions of soldiers who have enlisted for a salary are coming home demobilised. The Government, which is fully aware of the discontent among these fighting men, on account of invidious discrimination against them in army life, is talking of distributing free lands to them in a feeble attempt to appease them. Many more millions, who work in essential war factories, also will face unemployment. I cannot believe that anybody except a national government can tackle such problems.

The coming elections are not of great consequence by themselves, but they are a test and that is why we are contesting them. The question as to what we intend to do after winning the elections does not arise. Our main object is to consolidate the strength of the Congress. We do not propose now to fritter away our strength in minor disputes.

5. The sterling debts due to India amounted to £1000 million. Some British experts suggested that this debt might be reduced by half as, according to them, the war time purchases had been made at high rates. The fact was all government purchases, which led to the accumulation of sterling balances, had been made at controlled rates, below the then prevailing market rates.

## 7. Need for a Specific Plan<sup>1</sup>

What India wants from the British is a specific plan for the establishment of independence in the very near future, not vague proposals and "next steps". Neither the offer embodied in the recent speeches by Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Lord Wavell, nor that in the earlier Cripps proposals represents such a plan.

Question: Is the Congress Party in favour of a constituent assembly on the basis of the Cripps proposals?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress will favour such a plan only if the assembly is vested with real power to make final decisions and determine its own course of action. We must meet with the British on

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 24 September 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 September 1945.

an equal footing and our demands must not be subjected to their veto. If the British resort to a "take it or leave it" offer we shall do as we have always done with such offers in the past — we shall leave it.

Mr. Attlee is a well-intentioned liberal and although I welcome the change of Government in Britain, as far as India is concerned, I have not expected more from the Labour Government than from Mr. Churchill's Government.

Mr. Attlee and his Government will only go as far as the people push them. While the elections indicate a certain growth of liberal and socialist ideas in Britain and a reaction against Tory policies, the majority of the British people are concerned with domestic matters and know very little about India or its problems. They are willing to leave it to the experts, and hence exert very little real pressure on the Government.

## 8. On Working Class Unity<sup>1</sup>

I appeal to the Bombay workers to close up their ranks and strengthen their trade unions, so that the voice of the unions will be weighty in deciding their future in a free India. The present order of society is full of disparity — one man accumulates all powers in his hands or a few people possess all wealth. This extreme state of affairs has to be ended and a sound social order established if the real workers and peasants of the soil are to live a life of peace and happiness. We have tried to do enormous work in the political field. But as a national organisation deriving strength from the people of the land it looks to the workers for support to its programmes and activities. The ideal of Swaraj which the Congress has placed before you means real power in the hands of the people and its exercise by them to their benefit. Hence the Congress demands complete freedom from foreign domination. This can be achieved only by the strength of the people.

The Congress has decided to participate in the elections. By this it wants to show that it has the real backing and support of the workers in its activities. The day when the country attains complete freedom,

1. Address to a workers' rally at Bombay, 25 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 27 September 1945.

the Congress will cease to exist, as power over the affairs of the country will naturally be in the hands of the peasants, who form the bulk of the people, and the workers.

We have an absurd situation in the country. A few foreigners control the destinies of the people. The Government, fearful of the fact that the Congress may decide to form ministries in the provinces, had hastily dissolved some of the legislatures. And thus the absolute rule of the few foreigners continues.

In Bengal thirty to thirty-five lakhs of people died in what the Famine Commission called a 'could have been prevented' famine.<sup>2</sup> To our great shame and anger, the same officials are still ensconced in the seats of power.

This state of affairs must be ended as soon as possible. Those who are wholly unrepresentative of the people have acted as the country's spokesmen in the councils of the world. The sterling balances are now being sought to be exploited to further British trade. The great need of the moment is to drive the British away. "Quit India" is still our slogan.

I appeal to the workers to organise themselves on proper lines; they should never be influenced by communal considerations.

2. The official enquiry committee concluded that the Bengal famine was essentially man-made which timely action, by the provincial and Central governments could have averted.

## 9. Quit India—The Main Issue<sup>1</sup>

**Question:** On what lines do you propose to conduct the election campaign?

**Jawaharlal Nehru:** Quit India — It obviously means complete recognition of Indian freedom and not just the physical departure of the British.

**Q:** What was meant when you said that the Congress would crush all opposition?

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 26 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 27 September, *The Hindustan Times*, 27 September and *The Hindu*, 28 September 1945.



JN: I was referring to the elections. It is silly for a non-Congress candidate to hope to win any seat in the general constituencies. He will lose his deposit. This does not mean that the Congress will go about with a sledge hammer.

As regards Muslim constituencies, the Congress will contest the elections wherever possible. But it will not split votes by entering into a three-cornered fight to benefit any Muslim League candidate. Wherever a non-Muslim League candidate has chances, the Congress will lend him all support to defeat the League candidate. The Congress stands for a United India and any Muslim who stands for the ideal of United India will get the support of the Congress. The League will fight the election on the issue of Pakistan or division of India, which in my opinion is impossible to achieve.

Q: What steps will the Congress take to secure franchise for demobilised soldiers?

JN: The only step the Congress can take is to insist that the soldier be given his right, but it is not a question of only demobilised soldiers, but of all members of the armed forces.

Q: What propaganda will the Congress carry on among the members of the armed forces?

JN: Normally, the Government does not like any propaganda among its armed forces. In fact, the Government dislikes it intensely. At the same time I have come into contact with the brothers and sisters and other members of the families of the soldiers in the course of my general and agrarian work. My relations with them are good.

Q: Will the Congress take office after the election?

JN: I cannot answer this question. After the elections, all manner of difficult questions are bound to arise. One of these is the constituent assembly. And even more, the immediate question is that of the Centre. Unless these questions are satisfactorily solved, they will give rise to conflicts. When the Congress talks of 'Quit India', it does not do so in merely idealistic terms. I realise that it is not enough to pass resolutions for independence. But if the fact of the transfer of power is recognised in its totality, the method of such transfer itself will become a matter of arrangement. If this is denied there will be a conflict, although I cannot foresee what will be the shape of the conflict.

Q: Will the Viceroy or any representative of the British Government have a place in the constituent assembly?

JN: Normally speaking, no representative of the British Government will come into the constituent assembly. They have no place even according to their own showing, but when the question of British interests are being considered they may have a place. But whether we will actually object to the presence of a particular representative of the British Government at any stage, is a matter to be decided when it arises.

Q: What is your attitude to the Anglo-American attempt to set up an anti-Russian bloc in Asia?<sup>2</sup>

JN: All questions of foreign policy depend upon many factors, some idealistic, many realistic. Ultimately, the foreign policy of a nation will be guided by what it thinks is its national interest. Like all other countries India too will naturally think of its foreign policy in terms of its national interest. In doing so, India's likes and dislikes will no doubt play some part in shaping this policy. India's reaction to anything that America or Russia may do will largely depend on American or Russian policy towards India.

Q: Has there been any change at all in regard to Britain's approach to Indian matters?

JN: So far as I can see, there is no change whatsoever in Britain's policy. It is just scandalous impertinence on the part of the British Government to appoint Sir Geoffrey Prior<sup>3</sup> to represent the views of the Government of India at the Council of Foreign Ministers in London. We feel strongly about it. If the Labour Government is responsible, as presumably it is responsible, for this decision, it shows that it is entirely incompetent to handle the Indian question. Simply because we are silent, it should not be assumed that we acquiesce in such acts.

Q: What is your reaction to the situation in Satara?<sup>4</sup>

2. At the Foreign Ministers Conference in London, Britain and the U.S. were opposing the Soviet Union's territorial demands. The Soviet Government feared the formation of an Anglo-American bloc.
3. b. 1896; I.C.S.; Prime Minister, Alwar State, 1936-38; Political Resident, the Persian Gulf, 1939-46; Governor, Baluchistan, 1946.
4. Congress workers established a parallel government in Satara district in Bombay Presidency in 1943-44.



JN: So far as I have been able to find, the common people of Satara have shown an extraordinary ability for effectively organising themselves against heavy odds. They really built up an effective system of village government. It is doubtful if at any previous time these areas have been free from normal crimes as in this period. The village governments suppressed local crimes. The main lesson of Satara is that the common people of the villages can organise themselves, even against heavy odds, if given a chance to do so. It is an extraordinarily promising thing. In other parts of the country also village people have shown extraordinary powers of initiative and organisation. But they had a brief career because they had to face huge armies. These people, however, functioned for a couple of years. They are fairly well tested and they came out of the test remarkably well.

This is the general aspect of the question. It is true that some acts are really reprehensible. But they were individual acts. How can we judge a revolutionary movement from individual acts when the people as a whole have stood up to a test?

Q: Are you visiting England in the near future?

JN: I do not think there is the psychological need at the moment. Besides there is more urgent work to be done in the country now. My reaction to the proposal to go to England is strong. I do not want to go and will not go unless a vital necessity arises. In the past I have often wanted to go to England because I have many friends there. But I have developed a distaste to the idea of going to England now. I think it is but fair to the well-meaning friends of the Labour Party to inform them how we feel about this matter. They do not realise that the people of India are not satisfied with their pious platitudes about freedom. There is going to be no approach from us to the Labour Government, either as individuals or as a group, in England or India. Therefore, there can be no point in my going to England.

Q: Will you be in favour of sending a delegation if the Labour Government invites one?

JN: In that case I would view the suggestion from a different angle. If there is a job to be done I would go to England or anywhere for that matter.

Q: Will the Congress make any representation to the U.N.R.R.A.?<sup>5</sup>

5. A mission of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was then in India for procuring supplies, against India's contribution of Rs. 8 crores, for the relief of Europeans who had suffered because of the war.



JN: It is unlikely, although undoubtedly the situation in India could become very critical. Yet famine might come quite easily, perhaps on a poignant and large scale. So too unemployment.

Q: Will you advise a boycott of foreign goods?

JN: There is an amazing lack of goods of all descriptions in India. The country is short of such goods and it is difficult to expect it to continue to suffer. But the British attempt at dumping goods is objectionable and must be resisted. We are likely to have not only normal dumping of normal goods but abnormal dumping of abnormal goods such as war scrap which nobody wants. There is an attempt to use up the sterling balances and reduce India's credit in Britain.<sup>6</sup> I do not know if it is the Government of India or the Labour Government or the city of London that is responsible for it, but the indications are that attempts are being made to extort as much as possible in the shortest possible time before there is any change of Government.

Q: You said that you refuse to talk to the Muslim League. Is this not inconsistent with the resolution of the Working Committee on the question of self-determination?

JN: Where is the inconsistency? The Congress Working Committee has declared that it believes in a united India with the largest measure of autonomy for the provinces. At the same time it has declared that it is not going to compel any territory or area to join the Indian Union against the declared will of the people. There is, therefore, no question of talking to the League. It is for the population of a particular area to decide its own destiny — It is not for the Muslim League or the Congress to decide it.

During the last two years all our attempts to talk to the League have been one-sided. The Congress has made approaches, proposals and suggestions. The other side just goes on saying 'no'. It is somewhat odd that every time an attempt is made to talk to the League, it wants a testimonial or a chit from the Congress that it represents all the Muslims of India. But the Congress approach to the League by itself is a big enough testimonial. So the Congress cannot give a further testimonial which is inconsistent with the national character it has maintained for the last 60 years. Nobody will refuse to recognise the other

6. If Britain had repaid the sterling debt to India in goods which were in short supply it would have removed bottlenecks in the transition from a war to a peace economy. But Britain was trying at this time to use this balance to develop a high export trade, designed to secure a permanent gain by way of assured markets for British goods.

person, if the other person is prepared to talk sense and talk sense decently. It is impossible to open a discussion if the other party refuses to talk. It is a somewhat curious case. The League is making big claims before the world. But in this case the plaintiff does not define his claim but calls upon the defendant to do so.

The Muslim League is very strong in the Muslim minority provinces. It is not so strong in North-West India which is presumably included in the Pakistan demand. If we go to Baluchistan and Kashmir, the strength of the Muslim League becomes even less pronounced. Even in the Punjab, it is the urban influence that gives the League its strength and not the rural. It is quite clear that in the Punjab the Muslim League cannot form a Ministry without a coalition with other groups, because every group is opposed to the League. It is quite possible the League may win 25 per cent of the seats in the Punjab in the election, but it is probable it will get even less.

Q: How do you now face the Pakistan demand?

JN: Let me explain what I regard as the crux of the Pakistan issue, it is to be faced at any time. If we presume that a large number of Muslims want Pakistan and further that they should be allowed to have their way, it will mean that in the areas they are in a majority they will be given the right to vote on this decision and if necessary to vote themselves out. But there are areas in southern Punjab and western Bengal which are predominantly Sikh or Hindu. It is absurd to talk of self-determination for one community and at the same time to coerce large numbers of people who do not believe in Pakistan to become part of it. Therefore, Pakistan cannot even be considered without the possibility of the division of the Punjab and Bengal. Such a Pakistan will be very poor in resources and in its economic position. Further no Bengali or Punjabi, whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim or a Sikh, wants a division of the Punjab or Bengal. Of all provinces in India, Bengal is the most strongly-knit cultural unit and both Bengalis and Punjabis have stronger provincial feelings than the people of other provinces. Even Muslim Leaguers in the Punjab and Bengal are opposed to a division. So it comes to this, that the Muslim League must decide either on coercing people, who do not want Pakistan, to stay in Pakistan or agree to cut up the provinces to make Pakistan a more feasible proposition. The former alternative is impossible and the latter is difficult because they do not want it. Perhaps it is this difficulty that has come in the way of the League defining Pakistan.

Q: What action does the Congress intend to take against the Communists?



JN: There can be no question of taking action against the Communist Party, even if such a thing is possible. The Congress cannot take action against a specified or unspecified group which is not a part of it. We have, therefore, to look at the question to the extent it affects some Congressmen who also happen to be members of the Communist Party. Secondly, under the Congress constitution nobody can be prevented from becoming a primary member of the Congress. Anybody, whether an Indian or a Britisher or an American, can become a member of the Congress as long as he subscribes to Articles I of the Congress constitution.<sup>7</sup> But it stands to reason that the Congress should insist that persons who are not in agreement with the Congress policy should not be members of the Congress executive.

Certain members of the All India Congress Committee who have been served with notices, demanding why disciplinary action should not be taken against them for acting against the policy of the Congress, have been given a fortnight's time to put their case in writing and if necessary to explain in person to the sub-committee appointed to go into the question. The personnel of this committee, which was appointed by the Working Committee at Poona, is: Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and myself. The committee has reported to the Working Committee that there is a strong *prima facie* case against the Communists and that the Communist members should be asked to explain. In this connection, the Communist Party as such is not being accused, but only those Communist members who, having occupied important executive positions in the Congress, have failed to abide by the Congress policy.

This position applies to communal organisations also. The Congress has never said that members of the Hindu Mahasabha or of the Muslim League cannot become members of the Congress. But it has made a rule that members of a communal organisation whose policy is opposed to that of the Congress cannot hold executive positions in it. Some time ago it has been decided that the policies of the League and the Sabha are opposed to the policy of the Congress. In this connection I also deprecate the talk of purges. Under the Congress constitution nobody can be deprived of his primary membership except for misconduct or misdemeanour.

Q: Do you think that there will be a civil war in India on the withdrawal of British power?

7. Article I of the Congress constitution stated the objective to be "the attainment of complete independence by all legitimate and peaceful means."



JN: There is less likelihood of a civil war in India than it is in some countries of Asia and Europe. A large number of countries outside India are faced with the threat of internal troubles in the coming years. India will have its own troubles, but I personally do not think of a civil war because of communal trouble which many people seem to be thinking. India's troubles will arise inevitably following the transfer of power. Thus, for example, when a foreign government refuses to meet the wishes of the people there is one kind of reaction whereas if a government of the people delays to redress their grievances, the reaction is of a different kind. But these troubles will not be in the nature of a civil war.

Q: You once said at Lahore that the habit of touching feet is inconsistent with human dignity; but you have auctioned your kerchief. Is this consistent with your dignity?

JN: Do you think my dignity is tied up in my kerchief?

## 10. A Blueprint for a New India<sup>1</sup>

It is quite possible that the Congress might reject the new British proposals for settlement of the Indian question, if it finds as they develop, that they are not satisfactory.

Question: What did the Congress mean when it said that the latest proposals were unsatisfactory and vague? Does it indicate a rejection of the proposals?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Our attitude to the new proposals will depend on circumstances. Obviously, one does not know what these circumstances will be. For example, no one knows what type of constitutional convention is to be chosen or what would be the method of choosing delegates or what would be the position of princely states with relation to the rest of India in formulating the general constitution. In this whole position

1. Talk with editors, Bombay, 27 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 September and *The Hindu*, 29 September 1945.

or rather problem, there are so many factors outside the control of the British Government. It is rather premature to reject, but that does not preclude rejection of the proposals at a time when full facts are known. The position at the moment is under study and you can interpret the Congress resolution as you like, but I have explained the circumstances governing it. It could be said that the Cripps offer was fairly definite, but naturally conditions have changed and the proposal is consequently much less definite. I emphasise that any solution must involve the Centre.<sup>2</sup>

The Viceroy might say arbitrarily that there is a common measure on which agreement might be reached, and seek to establish conditions at that level. A common measure is usually a very low measure. The question whether the proposed procedure of starting with the elections would lead to settlement, depends on many factors that push towards a settlement, factors that would bring a settlement even if the British opposed it.

My preference is to settle the Indian problem by the people elected on the basis of a wider electorate than the one permitted by the present franchise. We want these questions settled by the people who are not so close to the communal problem. A settlement on an economic basis is needed. The communal problem is not one that the British created, but I think it is equally obvious that the communal problem has become immeasurably worse because of British policy. I can see no signs of British efforts to mitigate the problem. If it is not solved through the ordinary channels of the constituent assembly it must be settled by other ways. There are four obvious courses that can provide a solution: (1) an imposed decision (2) through agreement at convention (3) through civil war and (4) through an impartial tribunal.

No one can say that the Muslim League does not have a strong hold over the Muslims in India, but I insist that its hold is largely among city Muslims. Communal feeling is found only in cities, not in agrarian areas. The Muslims in the United Provinces have welcomed Congress assistance in easing tenancy troubles.

The world is divided into rival groups, possessed with, what I shall content myself with describing as, destructive power. It is right to say that we Indians will sympathise with those, whose sympathy will be on the side which helps India to attain its rights. The settlement of the Indian problem is of greater importance to Britain than any other problem. I think the British Government is wise enough to realise this and

2. The Federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935 was not in operation.



be impressed by the factors governing the problem today, quite irrespective of any personal sentiment in the matter.

If you look realistically at the world scene — and everyone sooner or later has to look realistically at the world scene—you will see that India is undoubtedly in a strong bargaining position. It is important for the world to know which way India goes, and I have stated that it will go with those who give it help towards the attainment of freedom.

We want rapid progress in India. I do not know what will happen to India unless there is rapid progress in her economic development. There must be a planned development. I have come to the conclusion that there must be, and there will be, socialistic planning. It seems to me that there will be a socialistic tendency in any programme.

Heavy industries together with mineral resources have been referred to as the key industries and should be owned by the state. It is likely that other industries will be left to private enterprise, but there should be a measure of control over them so that they would not interfere with state planning. The only problem of conflict will be between heavy industries and cottage industries. It is true to say that there is a difference in the philosophical attitude between the viewpoints of the cottage and the heavy industries. I do not see how we can raise the standard of life on a big scale without rapid industrialisation and without control to avoid overlapping and conflict of these two industries.

I think, for example, that the textile industry should be controlled by the state to prevent it from coming into conflict with the policy of the state in relation to cottage spinning industries. I should certainly have the textile industry controlled for that purpose.

The landlord system, in which small parcels of land are farmed under ownership of wealthy zamindars, must be ended. The abolition of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal and the zamindari system is necessary. Compensation in some form and on some basis will have to be settled. It is going to be difficult for us in one sense to have cooperative farms all over India. They are necessary, but the problem is very different from that of the establishment of such farms in Russia, as the conditions are absolutely different. We shall naturally have to use a great deal of persuasion to establish such farms. Remember that one-third of India's land is not cultivated and while some of it cannot be cultivated a great deal of it can be. We can have cooperative farms and cultivation of such land that is at present remaining a waste, with a little effort.

Q: What is your comment on reports that the British press and the public feel that the Congress resolution has been unfair to India?



JN: The British people do not realise the true feeling of India in regard to the constitutional problem. They have no comprehension whatever of its effect on Indians.

Q: What specifically would you have liked Lord Wavell to do?

JN: It should be made perfectly clear that the British Government proposes to walk out of the scene and that it is determined to do so. If such a policy is made perfectly clear there is no doubt that other things can be made easier of solution.

## 11. Police Responsibility for Bombay Riots<sup>1</sup>

In any big city, if the inevitable hooligan element is permitted to have free play, it is easy to start a riot.<sup>2</sup> It is easy too to create a certain psychological atmosphere that is favourable to rioting. It is so easy to start a riot. But normally people do not go about stabbing each other, and it is the innocent passers-by who suffer because of these hooligans and the handful of experts in stabbing. They are the cause of the trouble. They work in a suitable atmosphere. By 'suitable' I mean an atmosphere where there is a degree of sympathy for them. That is how they manage to operate.

The police and the city toughs should share the blame for religious excitement as a contributing cause.

There would be no riots if the Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police were told that they would be dismissed if a communal riot broke out in the city. The general view of the police is that a little riot is a good thing. It is really up to the police to prevent excessive bloodshed. Normal persons don't go about stabbing people. It is the job of a few experts as most of the stabbings in the previous communal riots are traceable to five or six hooligans.

1. Address to press conference, Bombay, 27 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 29 September 1945.
2. For three days, from 27 September 1945, Hindu-Muslim riots, described as the worst in five years, occurred in Bombay. Twenty three people were killed and 85 injured during the rioting.

No foreign Government can solve the problems that face us, for it can get no cooperation but only hostility and resistance. Those people, who do not resist, are a dead people. Those who cut themselves away from the rest of the country are restricting their growth.

While the urban population of all countries is growing up, it is the rural population that is growing in India. The progressive ruralisation of the country is a measure of its poverty.

We cannot improve agriculture if we do not improve social services, educational facilities, sanitation and like things.

A foreign Government cannot plan an economy for the country and it cannot think on proper lines and if it does, it cannot function except only in a vacuum. To solve all these problems it is necessary to have a government which reflects the desire of the people and which protects their rights.

## 12. The Flame of Freedom in Asia<sup>1</sup>

Although the purpose of this meeting is to inaugurate the election campaign, elections as such are not exercising my mind as much as certain other issues of burning importance. One of these is the trial of the members of the Indian National Army, which has made me don the robes of a barrister and appear in court. Being a counsel in the case, I would not like to speak of the trial itself, but I would like to draw your attention to the conditions which made possible the emergence of the I.N.A., the conditions in which it was born, and its brief but heroic career.

I have heard, for instance, that Captain Lakshmi<sup>2</sup>, officer commanding the Jhansi Regiment of the I.N.A., has been arrested again in Rangoon.

1. Speech at Bombay, 9 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 11 November, *The Bharat Jyoti*, 10 November and *The Hindustan Times*, 11 November 1945.
2. Capt. Lakshmi was the commander of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment of the Indian National Army. She was arrested in March 1945 and interned in Rangoon where she took charge of a hospital to help poor Indian patients. But she was removed after a few months to Kalaw, a village 400 miles away from Rangoon, under orders restricting her movements.



I do not know if she will be brought to trial, or if the arrest is merely meant as further harassment. But one thing I know very definitely, and it is that the I.N.A. has given the country a new slogan, a new battle-cry, a slogan which will remind the people of a brave chapter in the nation's history.

Another event of importance which calls for immediate attention is the ultimatum of the British Government to the Indonesians to lay down their arms.<sup>3</sup> In the context of Java's heroic struggle for freedom, the forthcoming elections seem but a tame affair. Indonesians are fighting for freedom. So are Indians. There are some Indonesians at this meeting and on seeing them, I feel both happy and ashamed. Their country is fighting the battle for freedom with desperate courage. We are proud of the people of Indonesia. We are proud that though ill-equipped in weapons of warfare, they are fighting desperately and with courage. They have not yielded nor bent their knees. We are told that the war is being fought for the freedom of all subject peoples. It is a matter of utter shame that the British Empire should be using all its armed might to restore Dutch domination over Indonesia.

It is a matter of shame, too, that the people of India are unable to give the Indonesians anything more than sympathy. The destinies of all Asiatic nations are bound together. We are partners in the struggle against European imperialism. Therefore, it is not enough merely to offer sympathy. India should give them active and constructive help. I admit that at present we are not prepared to do much, but I wish to sound a clear warning to the imperialist powers of Europe that if they do not quit Asia quickly and without any obstruction, it is clearly inevitable that there will be a gigantic conflict involving the whole world. The freedom movement in Java and other Asiatic countries is not something which can be suppressed by force. They may drop a few bombs, kill a few thousand people and destroy a few cities. But the urge for freedom will survive. And the flame of freedom which has been lit in Asia can result only in one thing, namely, the burning of imperialism the world over.

The Maharaja of Nepal must be told that the use of his troops in resisting the freedom movement of the people of Indonesia is against our national respect and heritage, and that it is fraught with serious consequences. Nepal, which is said to be a free state, should be ashamed that its ruler, claiming to be independent, has obliged the British Government by sending his troops to Indonesia. It is amazing that the Government of Nepal has not spoken out in this respect.

3. On 9 November 1945, the British ordered Indonesian leaders to surrender unconditionally, failing which there would be open warfare.



I want to speak clearly. I want to tell Nepal that this is a matter which will affect adversely the reputation of Nepal. It will also affect adversely the friendly relations between Nepal and the rest of India.

I commend the lead of the Indonesian seamen in refusing to load munitions or supplies on Dutch ships. I appeal to the Indian dockers as well as the trade interests concerned to take prompt steps to follow up this right and courageous lead. We should use all the resources at our disposal to oppose and obstruct the British in their war against Indonesia. If on this account action is taken against us under the Defence of India Rules or any other statute, we should be prepared to face it.

We have been in the field of battle for three years. Wherever I went, I have found a new awakening and a robust sense of resistance on the part of the people. I think we must now perfect our machinery and prepare for the next struggle. But the elections have come in the way, and we shall not show any weakness.

The individual candidates do not matter. But the organisation behind them and the policies for which the organisation stands matter. For my part I regard the elections as but a part of the preparation for the coming struggle. If Congress candidates are returned to the legislatures, no matter what we do after entering the legislatures, it will mean that we have taken one step forward in the march to our goal of freedom. For all we know the British Government may be interested in seeing that whoever opposes the Congress candidate wins the election, and may be hoping for the success of even Communist or Hindu Mahasabha or League candidates, because every such success of a non-Congress candidate means that the day of settlement of accounts with the Congress is postponed. The British Government knows full well that the Congress is an organisation which enjoys the confidence and support of the largest number of the people of this country.

But it is a foregone conclusion that the Congress will capture a majority of seats in most of the provinces, and in these there would be no government except of the Congress. I do not undervalue the work of provincial administration; but I feel that the Congress should not tie itself up in the red-tape of provincial administration on the 1937 pattern. Provincial administrations are important, but they are secondary. The capture of power at the Centre is primary and the achievement of complete freedom is fundamental. The work in the provinces should be pitched to this tempo. We are seeking the suffrage of the people on the Quit India slogan, and if the Congress legislators and ministers tend to forget this slogan, the people should remind them in a thousand voices. We should think of the initiative we

should take after the elections. We should not wait with folded hands for the British Government to make the move.

Those who talk much about Pakistan, should not forget that Pakistan cannot be established in Bombay, and if it comes into being at all, it will not be in those areas where the people are most vociferous about it. I am glad Mr. Jinnah has for the first time thrown some light on this big question.<sup>4</sup> But on an analysis of his definition I find that inherently the scheme of Pakistan will work against the interests of India as a whole and especially against Muslims in the so-called Pakistan provinces. Everyone is aware that the Muslims in Assam are in a minority. In southern Punjab, there is a majority of Hindus and in Ambala alone there are 80 per cent of them. The same figures obtain in eastern Bengal and in Delhi. One would like to know as to how Mr. Jinnah is going to solve the problem if the Hindus of these areas oppose his scheme and demand the right of self-determination. Will they be driven away from these areas or forced to live in them against their wishes? But Mr. Jinnah claims that there is cultural unity in these provinces. This explodes his two-nation theory. How can there be cultural unity if the Hindus and the Muslims are two different nations? Pakistan in the light of Mr. Jinnah's theory means breaking up the Punjab and Bengal into *Chota* Pakistan and *Chota* Hindustan. I am sure nobody would like this. Events alone will solve this problem.

I call on you to vindicate the Quit India slogan in the coming elections. Fifty per cent of the Congress candidates have already been declared elected. I know that Dr. Deshmukh and Mr. Masani will win. What I want you to do is to demonstrate your loyalty to the Congress by giving them the maximum number of votes.

4. On 8 November 1945 Jinnah outlined the details of an independent and sovereign Pakistan. It would include the N.W.F. Province, Baluchistan, Sind, Punjab, Bengal including Calcutta and Assam. Component provinces would have autonomy, but certain powers would be vested in the central government.



### 13. The Passing of British Rule<sup>1</sup>

We must not wait for the next move of the Wavell Government, but we must look at our own people and prepare ourselves for the last battle for freedom, which may come sooner than we anticipate.

The British Government wants to introduce Indianisation of the army and the Indian Civil Service after 150 years of its rule.<sup>2</sup> It is not a question of Indianisation of the army or the civil service in India, but the liquidation of British rule in this country.

Swaraj does not mean merely Indianisation of the army or the Indian Civil Service or the appointment of Indian governors in some provinces. Swaraj means the complete liquidation of British rule in India and the establishment of people's rule at Delhi and in all provinces. Our conception of Swaraj is a people's raj in which the Indian people will have sovereign and absolute power in their hands. The civil servants and the police will be the servants of the people, and not tyrants. It will be neither Hindu raj nor Muslim raj, but Hindustan raj, where all the people of India, irrespective of caste or creed, will exercise their absolute rights and sovereignty.

When we win Swaraj the first task which will face us is the task of wiping out poverty in India, so that every man in our country may have enough food, enough clothing and comfortable living accommodation. We must see to it that every man in our country is usefully employed.

The 1942 struggle shows clearly, if any proof is needed, that the Indian people have awakened. We have shown a true revolutionary spirit and urge for freedom when we revolted against the British Government all over the country and when all our leaders were clamped behind prison bars. We have, therefore, realised our strength in that struggle for freedom. But we must also cultivate a sense of discipline among ourselves. I have met some of the I.N.A. men, and I am deeply impressed by their remarkable sense of discipline and determination. If

1. Address to fishermen at Versova beach in Bombay, 11 November 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 November 1945.

2. In 1945, the ratio of British to Indian recruits in the I.C.S. and the Indian police was on the basis of an equality of numbers in each of the services. The ratio of the British and Indian officers in the army was 10 : 1. On 22 October 1945, the Commander-in-Chief announced that the government was planning complete Indianisation of India's armed forces.



we have to fight our last battle of freedom, we must organise ourselves with such a sense of discipline and determination.

#### 14. Impossibility of Accord with the League<sup>1</sup>

Whether we are successful in the election or not, the Congress cannot go in for any compromise with the Muslim League until it changes its present policy and its leadership and joins hands with the forces in the country which are fighting for independence. Let me make it clear that the League does not want any settlement with the Congress even if the demand for Pakistan is conceded. What will happen to the future of India is a different question. When the whole world order is cracking and the very existence of small nations is threatened, and when flames of revolt and rebellion are aglow in every subject nation, it is meaningless and futile to talk of Pakistan and an isolated existence. It is easy to talk glibly of Pakistan, but when viewed in the world perspective the issue becomes difficult to appreciate. The only yardstick of sincerity and patriotism of any political party in this country and in every subject country should be the ideal it has before it. It should give other issues a secondary place. Instead of giving any indication of this ideal as its main and immediate issue, the League during the last three years opposed the Quit India resolution. It is even said on behalf of the League that those who participated in the national struggle for freedom, those who went to jail and those who died as a result of the Government policy of repression, are all against the Muslim League ideal of Pakistan and against the interests of Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

I ask these misguided persons to read again the August Resolution and understand its implications. But I am convinced that even if you grant Pakistan the League is not interested in an agreement with the Congress on the issue of national independence.

1. Speech at Bombay, 11 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 November and *The Hindustan Times*, 12 November 1945.
2. On 24 April 1943, Jinnah claimed that the movement started by the Congress was taken by Muslims to be against their vital interests and the Hindu leadership should call it off.

I am constrained to say, if you want Pakistan, you can surely take it. Fight for it, sacrifice for this cause if it is sacred, and work for its attainment. In the three years that have passed, the League, except for thundering speeches and threats, veiled and open, has done nothing towards this end. When Congressmen were arrested, jailed and chased by the police, the League leaders passed resolutions and gave threats of dire consequences if Pakistan was not granted.

The history of the last 25 years of the Congress fight for freedom will show that the Congress was the only political party in this country which has been working for the complete independence of India and for the happiness and wellbeing of its 40 crores of people. Swaraj, for which the Congress has been struggling, is for the whole country, and not for a particular community or party. The Congress seeks freedom for all the people of India. It is impossible to believe that Hindus will dominate and tyrannise the Muslims or, as a matter of fact, one community will dominate another. We tried our utmost to approach the Muslim League and reach an understanding. But whenever we went to the leaders of the League we were not only slighted, but our friendly gestures were taken as signs of weakness and impossible demands were made. We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that the League is not anxious to work for the freedom of India. But the Congress is convinced that the moment the British quit the land a solution will be found for all our ills, national and communal.

What would happen if the British quit the country? When the foreign power withdraws its domination the way will be clear for us to solve our problems. If we are not able to find a solution, some say there will be a civil war. If a civil war comes, we shall then devise means to face it.

At any rate, it is impossible for any understanding to be reached either today or tomorrow. And I will make it clear that an understanding can never be reached with the League. But the League should not be understood to be an organisation representing all the Muslims of India. We shall go to the Muslims, approach them and hear their grievances and try to redress them.

The League, by its intransigence and obstructionist tactics, has lowered the political standard of our country. The League is consequently far from our sphere of political activity. But I will lend my ears to the League if it gives a call to fight for our freedom.

After the elections, the Congress will have to find a solution for the major problems of the country, such as economic maladjustment, the growing poverty of the people and illiteracy. They can be solved only with the support of the people in the coming elections.

I ask you not to judge the individual candidates set up by the Congress to contest the elections, but to judge the organisation they represent and the sacrifices it has made in the cause of freedom.

## 15. Fallacy of Jinnah's Pakistan<sup>1</sup>

Jai Hind! There is a host of questions before me and I do not know where to begin. There are all kinds of questions from the latest reply of Henderson<sup>2</sup> in the Commons to possibilities of the atomic bomb.

With regard to Mr. Arthur Henderson's reply, stating that my visit to Java is undesirable, I may say that conditions in Java are undoubtedly critical. It is because conditions are critical, I want to go. Obviously, the object he has in view is different from what I have in view. I am not going on a pleasure trip.

Question: Would you give your views on Mr. Jinnah's exposition recently made on the Pakistan blueprint?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is now a hackneyed subject. It seems to me obvious that, according to Mr. Jinnah's own premises, the definition of Pakistan is completely wrong. That is to say, Mr. Jinnah includes the whole of the Punjab, Bengal, Assam and the Delhi province in Pakistan.

Now, everybody knows that southern Punjab, western Bengal and the Delhi province are predominantly non-Muslim. This means that either the non-Muslim population agrees to Pakistan or is compelled to accept it. Obviously, whatever we may think of the Muslim population, everybody knows that Hindus and Sikhs are entirely opposed to Pakistan. Therefore, the only alternative for Mr. Jinnah, if he wishes to have his Pakistan, is to compel them to accept it either with the

1. Address to press conference, Bombay, 13 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 November, *The Times of India*, 14 November and *The Hindustan Times*, 14 November 1945.
2. On 12 November 1945, Arthur Henderson, Under-Secretary for India, said that the decision to refuse facilities for Jawaharlal to visit Indonesia was "taken with the agreement of the Supreme Allied Commander in view of the present disturbed conditions in Java which render it undesirable for such a visit to be made."



help of the British Government or by the League itself. In either case, Pakistan, in the form stated by Mr. Jinnah, is an unthinkable proposition, impossible for realisation, whatever happens.

Pakistan can be conceived, if at all, only in terms of those areas where there is a dominant Muslim population. Of course, even in such areas, it will mean that the entire population, and not Muslims alone, should have the final voice.

It is obvious, therefore, that this question, like most other questions, will not be decided by the Muslim League or by the Congress. It will have to be decided ultimately by the people of India as a whole. And it is equally obvious that in any such decision, large-scale compulsion cannot be, and must not be, applied.

The Congress feels that Pakistan will not solve any issue, but will create many new problems. At the same time, it does realise that every unit, every province or community in India must have the fullest opportunities of living its own life and self-growth, without compulsion from outside. That is why the Congress has suggested that the largest amount of freedom should be given to every area in India and that only a certain limited number of federal subjects be reserved as common subjects.<sup>3</sup> Even if there is separation, you will have common subjects like defence, communications, etc., to be considered.

Mr. Jinnah refers to safeguards. Safeguards will of course apply to the whole of India too, by the same argument. The conception of Pakistan, as put forward by the League, is not really a territorial conception, but one based on what is called the two-nation theory. According to this theory, bits of Pakistan exist all over India, and in case of a division of India, we would have a large alien population in each of the divided parts. No state can have stability on this basis. Inevitably, there must be common bonds, however small and limited they may be, between the various parts of India.

It may be possible to have what might be called a compulsory minimum of common or federal subjects and an optional list which each unit could choose to accept, at its pleasure. This would give a great deal of freedom to a unit to go as far as it likes, subject to its associating itself with the centre. No question can possibly arise of ultimate compulsion of huge provinces.

3. The resolution of August 1942 had stated: "The provisional government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the governance of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units."

Q: Mr. Jinnah has favoured the idea of opposition parties functioning in Pakistan, and not one party rule.

JN: I suppose he will get plenty of opposition. The parties in India as they function today are not really parties at all. The Congress, for instance, is not a party at all, except in the legislature. It is a movement. It is a joint platform of numerous parties and groups for the achievement of one essential thing, namely, national freedom. As soon as this issue is solved, there will be many parties formed on economic and other bases. It simply means that we must have a democratic system.

I completely agree with the view that there should be parties, and I am opposed to all authoritarianism.

The idea of religious groups does not fit in with territorial arrangements. I don't understand how a Muslim in Madras or a Hindu in Peshawar can exercise the right of self-determination. I don't understand either how any religious group can exercise it, because the idea of a religious group does not fit in with territory. You may choose a territory to exercise its opinion, but not a religious group. I have the strongest objection to it because it does not solve a single problem and it creates new problems. I can perfectly understand the desire of a territorial unit or a group to have this freedom, but it is limited by certain factors.

Semi-independent provinces within a federal structure can have a sense of security. If you divide India, you lose this sense of security. There will be friction. You will need separate armies. Suspicion and difficulties will arise. Development of internal resources in smaller areas is very difficult. The main problem of India is poverty. India has to make up some 150 years of arrested growth. Our energies cannot be diverted to sentimental problems.

We have got into a mental rut, not only in regard to communal questions and various minor affairs, but in regard to the whole question of the constitution. We are so deeply in the rut that we would think more or less on the lines laid by the British Government — the assemblies, the Governors, high courts, chief courts, and what not. We ought to think on other lines. We can take parallels from Russia in the solution of national and other problems, and consider them afresh. We are so tied with the old arguments, separate electorates, joint electorates, etc., that the vicious circle presents itself everywhere. The Pakistan issue has simply made it still more difficult to get away from this vicious circle.

Q: Can you comment on the feeling prevalent in official and non-official circles that recent speeches of Congress leaders including yourself tend to incite people to rebellion?



JN: I cannot help these feelings. If my speeches lead people to think that the Indian problem cannot be static, and that they have revolutionary implications, then my speeches have served a good purpose.

Q: What are the prospects of Congress success at the polls, specially in the Muslim constituencies?

JN: Obviously, the question does not arise about general seats. The Congress will capture them. As for the Muslim seats the position is different. I think Congress or pro-Congress candidates are likely to gain a considerable number of Muslim seats in the United Provinces. I would expect 25 to 30 out of 66 seats will be captured by the Congress. I think this estimate is likely to be correct, not only in respect of the number of seats, but also the number of votes. In the Central elections, I think the League may do better than in the provincial elections, because the franchise to the Central legislature is restricted. The Congress appeals to the wider electorate than to a limited electorate. But one thing seems to be obvious. In no province is the Muslim League likely to have an absolute majority. This applies to the Muslim majority provinces also. Therefore, the need may arise for coalition with other groups. By itself the League will not be in a position to form a government in any province, as far as I can see.

Q: What is your reaction to Mr. Attlee's assertion<sup>4</sup> in a recent speech that freedom for India has been there for the taking and that communal differences alone stand in the way of the realisation of this freedom?

JN: It is a terminological inexactitude. Communal differences might be an obstacle, but it does not lie in the mouth of Mr. Attlee to say this. What is the use of saying that India's freedom is there for the taking when freedom is not there, but there are so many provisos for agreement from parties and interests and from the British Government. The question of India's freedom will really arise only when the British Government announces its decision to eliminate itself leaving us to settle our differences. This, in my opinion, is the only fair position the British Government in India can take. It is quite obvious that in such circumstances, taking the major groups in India, neither group is going to crush

4. On 9 November 1945, Attlee said: "Ever since the Cripps offer in 1942 India's complete freedom has been there for the taking. The only obstacle so far—a very grave obstacle—has been the failure of Indian communities to agree among themselves."

or remove the other from the scene. Then there would be a compulsion of events which would force them to come to an agreement.

Q: Will the Congress contest Muslim seats in the provinces?

JN: We propose to contest every Muslim seat in all the provinces, either directly or indirectly through nationalist Muslim organisations. We are not going to leave any seat uncontested.

Q: How is nationalisation of industries possible?

JN: There is always a great difficulty in answering such a question, because the answer depends on who owns the state—an oligarchy or the British or the people of India. Nationalisation of industries in India with the British Government in control is not real nationalisation. It will be controlled by the British. In our view, nationalisation of industries means control by a people's national government.

The National Planning Committee has repeatedly made it clear that the state should own and control its own key and heavy industries and has defined the terms for such control. For purposes of planning, some sort of control is required even on other industries. First of all there is a general agreement that we should keep out foreign economic control and that control and development of Indian industries should be in Indian hands. Foreign capital brings in a certain amount of foreign interference and it should be zealously watched. It may be necessary, in order to develop India rapidly, to have foreign capital. But if this is to be accepted, it can be accepted only on the express condition of Indian control.

I think the percentage of investment or share of control is irrelevant. In every exceptional case, involving secret processes, the country will have to make the choice as to whether it will develop the industry or not, and whether it will use the secret process on these conditions, but generally control by foreign capital should not be allowed. And national government that comes into being should examine these questions and should not allow present agreements, involving foreign participation, to continue. The future Government of India is going to be strong enough to take such a decision.

Q: What is your view on the question of land settlement?

JN: I stand for the abolition of the permanent settlement in Bengal and the big zamindari system in other provinces. As regards compensations, it is desirable to give some kind of compensation, the quantum



of which is to be decided by the national government. But it would at no stage prove a burden on the cultivator. In my opinion, it is always better to pay such compensation or some such payment at the commencement than face trouble later.

Q: What attitude should the Indian army officers, having nationalist leanings, adopt, on dispatch of Indian troops to colonial territories and Japan and on help to Indonesians?

JN: I think that Indian army officers should feel and think as Indians and, when occasions arise, express their opinion in favour of Indian freedom. We should like the officers of the Indian army to develop national sentiments and to come more in touch with the people, even under the present conditions when they are part and parcel of the British army.

No Indian army should be sent to any territory, not even to Japan, to humiliate anybody. If the Japanese are humiliated by Allied arms, as alleged, Indian armies should not be a party to it. I agree with the suggestion that seamen and dock workers engaged in transport of war materials to Java should refuse to load and unload cargo for Java and that a general strike should be organised all over India. I wish I could help the Indonesian Republic more effectively than the Congress is able to do at present.

Q: How can the menace of the atom bomb be checked?

JN: It cannot be checked effectively unless the fundamental causes which create friction and war among nations are removed. So long as these causes exist, there will be the use of the atom bomb, or something worse than that. Therefore the question really is one of trying to remove the causes of inequality and friction. At present, there is imperialist control of various countries. There is financial imperialism as well as racial inequality. All these things must go and then some kind of an effective world order which can use, not the atom bomb, but the forces released by the destruction of the atom for beneficial purposes should be set up. Probably, in another 10 or 15 years, practical applications of atomic energy will be made. This would mean a great revolution upsetting economic theories and structures. This revolution caused by atomic energy can either destroy human civilisation or take it up to higher levels.

Q: What is your reaction to the civil war in China?

JN: It is obviously very distressing that there should be something in the nature of a civil war in China. And if I can presume to give advice

to anybody, it should be that effective steps should be taken to end it. But this is all talking in the air, of course.

Q: Do you think that American and Russian troops should be withdrawn from China?

JN: Foreign intervention is always dangerous.

## SIND

### 1. Will to Achieve Freedom<sup>1</sup>

The nation has only one immediate issue—that is India of tomorrow and its freedom. The world has changed and the situation in India has changed during the last nine years. The nation might have made some mistakes. It has to profit from the lessons of these mistakes. In the last three years particularly, India passed through many troubles, hundreds were shot dead, thousands were jailed and millions died in famine. The peasants suffered untold miseries which had not been made known by newspapers. In spite of all these India is not weak today. Its spirit remains high. It has emerged stronger, vigorous and determined to sweep away any road blocks on its path to liberty.

In this age, nations make total war for the principle they stand for, right or wrong. They sacrifice everything to maintain their integrity. Even small nations like Indonesia are defying the combination of Dutch and British imperialism. India too has grown strong during the past 25 years and has demonstrated to the world that it will no longer tolerate foreign rule.

When Congress leaders were arrested, the people spontaneously rose against the Government. For the Congress, nonviolence is not only a weapon of expediency but an article of faith. If, however, assurances are demanded from us by the British that violence will not be adopted, I will say that it is none of their business. They should get out of India. Violence or nonviolence, India will soon be free.

1. Speech at Karachi, 3 January 1946. From *The Tribune*, 5 January 1946.



The main problem before India is freedom, that is, to get the British out. Other issues are of minor importance at the moment. The Congress has been struggling for freedom and on every occasion of its struggle it has grown stronger and become more and more powerful.

The British empire is only seemingly strong. The British people are a valorous nation, steadfast and courageous, but they have now lost the strength which enabled them to hold an empire.

Old ideas and thoughts have gone. The atom bomb has revolutionised the outlook of the people. No country can be strong unless it is large and powerful and has resources to make itself self-dependent. The withdrawal of foreign rule by itself will not make India a strong nation. It has to develop its resources after becoming free. It may take years before India will be powerful in the modern sense of the term.

Division of India is neither economically nor politically a sound proposition. The Muslim League has mentioned Pakistan as its goal. It has not defined its economic or social objectives. Pakistan has no meaning for the present. It cannot be established till the British goes. This means that Pakistan can come about only after India has become free. The Muslim League is not a fighting organisation. It is an electioneering body with Pakistan as its election cry. If India should be strong, it should prevent internal conflicts within its units. The Communist support for Pakistan has nothing to do with Marxism or socialism. They carry on a propaganda to break India into 13 pieces.

The Congress has favoured a federation of willing units. But it would not force or coerce any unit into a federation. If Muslims, after freedom has been won, want separation, no one will deny it. If Pakistan breaks away from India it will face the danger of being seized by reactionaries and vested interests for exploitation. How can anyone allow this to happen?

All political organisations desire the end of British rule. Yet it is only the Congress that challenges its authority and fights against it.

## 2. Ministries on Quit India Basis<sup>1</sup>

If the Congress accepts ministries, it will be on the Quit India basis. After the elections, the Congress will take up its programme from where

1. Speech at Jacobabad, 5 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 7 January 1946.

it had been left in August 1942, and prepare the country for the final struggle. Do not be carried away by the propaganda of communal organisations. Do not fight among yourselves. Look at the Azad Hind Fauj. It is composed of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and they are all united. India's problems will be easier after the British quit India. The Congress is the only powerful organisation which has carried on the struggle. We shall fight on and the victory is sure to come.

I also appeal to the Muslims of the Upper Sind Frontier district to vote for the Nationalist Muslim candidates.

### 3. Muslim League's Reactionary Programme<sup>1</sup>

The Muslim League is an organisation with a reactionary programme. This kind of interruption<sup>2</sup> is typical of the Muslim League which is afraid of hearing the truth. Nobody wants to force you to act against your conviction. I, for my part, want everyone in India to understand the problems facing him and come to independent decisions. I want no blind sheep. Why are the Muslim Leaguers afraid of hearing criticism of the League policy? This shows that the Muslim League has done nothing for freedom or for the poor masses and has no programme. But the Congress has a programme which is partly found in the election manifesto. Nobody is going to be afraid because of such interruptions or the repetitions of the bogey of Pakistan.

1. Speech at Larkana, 5 January 1946. From *The Hindu*, 6 January 1946.

2. Supporters of the League were disturbing the meeting.

### 4. The Picture of Free India<sup>1</sup>

The country's future is not decided by resolutions, but by the people's will and determination. India's future will be what the people of free

1. Speech at Rohri, 6 January 1946. From *The Tribune*, 8 January 1946.



India decide. The picture I have in my mind of a free India is that of a country where all people have equal opportunities for advancement, where no artificial barriers are raised against their progress, where communal controversies have vanished, where neither Hindu raj nor Muslim raj had sway, where civilisation, culture and language of every community are protected and where everyone gets employment, food, shelter, education and medical relief. That is why I am laying so much stress on the Planning Committee.

In the present world conditions no small state can exist. Pakistan cannot be free. It will mean a slave country where Muslims would not like to live even if it is granted. The Congress will not allow any division of India. The Congress wants a united free India.

## 5. Hindu Communalism<sup>1</sup>

Cries of Hinduism in danger or Islam in danger are foolish, meaningless cries. Both Hinduism and Islam are great institutions and cannot be destroyed by cries. It is strange that the Hindu Sabha is so loud in denouncing the Congress and accusing it of favouring the League. But it had once joined the League to form ministries. They both stand for India's slavery and perpetuation of the British raj. They knock at the door of the British Government. But the British Government will go out soon. At whose doors will they knock thereafter? The Hindu Mahasabha is a useless body, but more useless, more degenerate and more disgraceful than all other organisations is the Sind Hindu Sabha.

The Congress is not fighting the elections for capturing ministries, but for strengthening itself so that it should fight India's freedom struggle with greater force. I have not come merely to ask you to vote for the Congress. An election is a matter of passing interest. The Congress is keen on carrying out the fight for freedom. Hence I would ask everyone to get ready for the coming struggle and enlist himself as a soldier in India's war for freedom.

1. Speech at Sukkur, 6 January 1946. From *The Tribune*, 8 January 1946.

## 6. Independence and Inter-dependence<sup>1</sup>

There are in Sind as in any other parts of India, enormous crowds, great enthusiasm and an electric atmosphere. This is more in evidence all over India now than at any time before. Politically speaking, Sind politics is a little difficult for a visitor to analyse. There is no politics at all. It is partly tribal and clan loyalty and loyalty to certain backward elements, that is, big feudal magnates who exercise some control over others. So the various labels that people attach to themselves, as candidates in the election or members of parties, have seldom the same significance as elsewhere in India. Even the Congress which probably is the only true political organisation is necessarily influenced by these factors. The Muslim League is also very much influenced by this, and I doubt if the candidates put up on behalf of the League for the election are in any way real Muslim Leaguers. Probably they are just accepted because they might win. Again, the politics of this province has been in a curious tangle, with people shifting about from one group to another. It is also unfortunate that the Sind administration is notorious for its corruption. The war has brought much money into some pockets and it will, no doubt, flow out during the elections. Sind suffered a very grave loss in the death of Mr. Allah Baksh, who was peculiarly suited to unravel the tangle, and the manner of his death itself is significant of Sind politics. Sind has also gained notoriety for frequency of political murders. There is a certain nomadic character about a part of its population. All these factors show that there is a total lack of equilibrium in the public life and politics of Sind. The one stabilising factor can be the Congress.

In an ideal world, there can be perfect self-determination for everyone and every group. In practice, however, this is severely limited by certain dominating factors. We have arrived at a stage today in the world, when even complete national self-determination is limited in many ways by world factors. We demand independence for India, that is, complete self-determination for India as a whole, but we always make it clear that there can be no complete independence for any country in the sense of isolation. Therefore, we have always said that the solution of the world's problems is to be found by means of a world federation of free nations cooperating with each other.

1. Interview to the press, Karachi, 9 January 1946. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 11 January and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 January 1946.



Independence and inter-dependence have to go together in this world. If this is applied even to a large country like India, much more does it apply to small countries. Indeed, the idea of self-determination for small countries in Asia or in Europe today is just a theory which cannot be put into practice. Such nations may be theoretically independent, but, practically, they will be dependent on some large nations of whom they will be client states. Therefore, to talk of self-determination by itself does not mean much, and in India it is specially liable to lead to a confusion of issues, because we are dealing with all parts of India. On the other hand, it is perfectly clear that any federation of free peoples can only be based on the willing cooperation of unions. Anything else means compulsion and coercion, may be by armed intervention. This kind of thing is undesirable in itself and, as a matter of fact, in the modern context of the world is practically impossible. Apart from this, any attempt to compel large groups would result in diversion of national energy and prevent the rapid progress we are aiming at as soon as we are free.

**Question:** Are you in favour of a united Indian federation or a division of India?

Jawaharlal Nehru: To ask me whether I am in favour of a united Indian federation or a division of India shows a certain lack of knowledge of what the Congress has been saying all along. We are intensely in favour of a federation of various parts of India as it consists today. We propose to work for it with all our energy, but we realise that the way to achieve it is not by shouting out that we shall compel everyone or every group, but rather to demonstrate, by facts and arguments, that there is no other way out, and show that, in such a federation, every province and every group will have the fullest freedom to develop according to its wishes and genius. This is to remove fears from the minds of those who may think that they will be oppressed. Most of our thinking on this issue is done in the context of the British Government in India. Once the British Government disappears from the picture, all these questions completely change their shape. One of the essential differences between the outlook of the Congress and that of the communal bodies is that the Congress thinks in terms of India without the British Government. The communal bodies can hardly imagine India without the British Government and so they go to the government to press their separate claims.

**Q:** Will the visit of the British Parliamentary delegation lead to important results?

JN: Nobody claims that the visit of the delegation is going to lead to important results. It is always good to have personal contacts even with opponents and, therefore, we would gladly meet the members of the delegation. But the idea of certain members of Parliament coming out to investigate conditions in India is rather odd. One would have thought that Parliament, which often lectures to us, knew all about us. But if they do not know about India, and if they are going to start learning now, I hope they will stop their sermonising. I have no doubt that the members of the delegation have friendly intentions towards India. Some of them are well known friends of ours, but this is not a personal question but a question of future relations of England and India. The question has to be dealt with on a higher plane.

Q: Tell us about your conception of an Asiatic bloc.

JN: India is likely to dominate politically and economically the Indian Ocean region. The strategic position of India is such that it is difficult to organise the defence of the countries to the right and to the left of India without India's cooperation. Therefore, in the natural order of events, these countries and India should come closer together for mutual protection, as well as mutual trade. What these countries are likely to be, one cannot say now, except that, normally speaking, they would include the neighbours of India on either side. China is an entirely separate problem and I hope that China will be on the closest terms of alliance with India. As regards the remaining countries of Asia, it is difficult to see how things will take shape. There is talk of an Asiatic federation, and such a federation has a certain appeal about it. It must be remembered, however, that a huge part of Asia belongs to the Soviet Union and necessarily much will depend on the action and interaction of Soviet policy with the policies of other Asiatic countries.

Q: Is independence for India coming soon?

JN: Some say that something big is going to happen. There are, however, so many factors unconnected with the immediate issues which lead one to think that nothing big is going to happen. The fact that large numbers of our people are in prison or under detention is significant in itself. The fact of British policy in Indonesia is very important. Even the speeches of prominent statesmen in England are singularly lacking in any content. If a really big move in establishing Indian independence is taken by England, obviously, we shall gladly respond to it. If it is not, it is equally obvious that we shall take the initiative in



our own hands, and take such steps as we think fit and proper. The whole Indian political situation is tense and India cannot brook delay.

Q: Would the Congress accept office?

JN: The Congress might accept office, not with the intention of implementing the economic programme, because this programme cannot be implemented as a whole in the present conditions, but more so because of the political consideration. The Congress has entered the elections, and will accept office if it so decides at the time, on the basis of Quit India. It will cooperate with those who subscribe to the Congress point of view.

Q: What is going to be the future of the I.N.A. men?

JN: The Congress proposes to absorb them in every possible way in the national activities which need not be political activity. It is a big problem. A number of them can be absorbed in industries and some of them in village work. We are also thinking in terms of getting them trained to form industrial cooperatives. A number of them may be absorbed in direct public works, but it is not our desire to make politicians out of them, individuals apart.

Q: What is now the work of the National Planning Committee?

JN: The committee might be able to finish the work in the course of the next summer. The Government of India is cooperating to the extent that it is sending some material and it has also deputed its representatives to attend the meetings of the committee.

Q: Why has not the Congress put up candidates in Muslim constituencies?

JN: Generally speaking, we are cooperating in this matter of the elections with the Nationalist Muslims, and we have put up Congress candidates to the provincial assembly in the United Provinces. We did not take the Central Assembly elections seriously, because of the very restricted electorate, and because the Congress influence is greater where the electorate is wider. Our programme itself is a mass programme. In provincial elections a very large number of Muslim candidates are being put up in various provinces. Roughly speaking, nearly half the number of Muslim candidates are contesting on the Congress ticket in the U.P.

The Muslim League deliberately and consciously spreads hatred towards the Congress, and holds the Congress responsible for all its ills. As for the Hindu Mahasabha, there is no doubt that the Congress is too strong for it. The Muslim League policy is deliberate, not because it really feels any hatred, but because it is sometimes easy to rouse the people by slogans of hatred and divert them from real issues. It is singularly a fascist slogan. The mass mind, which responds to the call of hatred, makes the hatred mainly responsible for all its ills.

Our national movement, especially in the last 25 years, owing to Mahatma Gandhi's influence, has been admirably free from hatred. No national movement anywhere in the world has been so free from hatred as ours. It is so due to the policy of the Congress. But the Muslim League, which has no constructive policy, deliberately keeps up a campaign of hatred towards the Congress. Today the demand for Pakistan is very much in the air. Personally, I do not think Pakistan will come, but the thing that will continue to remain is hatred and suspicion. I do not think this is now deep-rooted, but it is reflected in current politics. In the elections, if we think that hatred will not be caused if we put up certain candidates we should do that. In the U.P. our general policy has been to put up Congress candidates for rural areas and Nationalist Muslims for cities.

The Congress will not insist on the adoption of adult franchise for the constituent assembly. Enlargement of the franchise will cause delay in establishing a constituent assembly. We want to avoid delay. It is a bitter pill to swallow. I do not know how much wider the franchise can be made. The people will be represented by elected representatives.

The Hur situation in Sind calls for immediate investigation. There is no doubt that the Hurs are an aggressive, rather terroristically inclined, group. Normally, terrorists are small groups, but the Hurs are a large group. In fact, they seem to be a large group in active war against the British Government adopting methods which we may call terrorist, or we may call them resistance groups in modern parlance. It is obvious that no State can tolerate terrorism on a small or a big scale, but it is very extraordinary that this large group, consisting of about 100,000, has been consistently carrying on this war against the British Government. It is an amazing thing. We may condemn their acts, but it is no good to brand a huge group as scoundrels and criminals and dispose of them in this way. One must analyse the feeling and the strength behind them. They have shown amazing strength. Any group like this which has been treated like outlaws for six years and



which is still not submitting requires understanding and careful handling. I understand that there are a large number of Hurs kept in camps, including a large number of women and children, and their condition is very bad. They are not even properly fed. I cannot pass any final opinion upon the subject, but my mind is severely agitated by the treatment of tens of thousands of people, women and children, in this very inhuman way and the fact that these people have been carrying on this war against the huge State apparatus has impressed me. There must be an intense feeling behind the movement. Ordinary individuals, terrorists, anti-social elements, cannot survive like them. Whether they are semi-religious or political, I cannot say, but I think any government should, first of all, mitigate immediately the rather inhuman conditions in which they are kept. Secondly, they must investigate the problem from a larger viewpoint, and try to understand it. When a hundred thousand people are involved, it is just too silly to call them a criminal tribe. They can make all of them criminals by treating them like criminals, but their perseverance and courage show they deserve a great deal of consideration from the Government.

I pay tribute to Allah Baksh and suggest that some suitable memorial to perpetuate his memory be planned.

## THE I.N.A. TRIALS





## 1. The Fate of the I.N.A. Prisoners<sup>1</sup>

I demand that the Government of India clarify the position of the prisoners of the Indian National Army, who fought against the British along with the Japanese.

About 25,000 Indian soldiers, mostly Sikhs and Muslims, joined the Japanese after the fall of Singapore and formed the Indian National Army to fight the British. I affirm that they were misguided, but whatever they did was done by them out of patriotic motive. Most of them have, however, been arrested and are reported to be in Indian jails. What treatment the Government of India will mete out to them is a matter of great concern for us. No doubt, these people committed a mistake, but, if they are treated harshly, it will create bad blood between England and India.

I advise the workers of the National Conference to avoid narrow grooves and petty squabbles. The problems of Kashmir will be solved when the problems of India as a whole are solved. Kashmir's vital problems cannot be solved in isolation. Keep your ideals high and choose the right path to gain your purpose. It is necessary you should guard yourselves against opportunism, for it may harm you ultimately.

1. Address to the workers of the Kashmir National Conference, Srinagar, 19 August 1945. From *The Tribune*, 20 August 1945.

## 2. The Shadow of the Gallows<sup>1</sup>

There is one matter which has been paining and troubling me for some time, but to which I have made no reference so far, because any mention of it might have been misunderstood. But now that the war has ended, there is no such reason to remain silent on this issue. This concerns the 20,000 or more prisoners of the Indian National Army, which was formed in Malaya and Burma. I was of the opinion three years ago, and am still of the opinion, that the leaders and others of

1. Interview to the press, Srinagar, 19 August 1945. *The Hindu*, 22 August 1945.



this army had been misguided in many ways, and had failed to appreciate the larger consequences of their unfortunate association with the Japanese.

Three years ago, I was asked in Calcutta what I would do if Subhas Bose led an army into India on the plea of liberating India. I replied then that I would not hesitate to resist this invasion, even though I did not doubt that Subhas Bose and his Indian colleagues and followers were motivated by the desire to free India, and were in no way mere tools of the Japanese. Nevertheless, they had put themselves on the wrong side, and functioned under the auspices of the Japanese. No person could come to India in this manner or under such foreign auspices. Therefore, whatever the motive of these people, they had to be resisted in India or outside.

But the situation has completely changed with the end of the war. And now a very large number of officers and soldiers of this Indian National Army, as it is called, are prisoners. Some of them have been executed. Though information is inadequate, it is reliably stated that bad treatment is being given to them in the prisons and forts, where they are kept, and many of them live under the shadow of death. I do not wish to complain to the British about strict military rule. They can justify their treatment in any way they like. But as an Indian, and as one representing, in this respect, the views of almost all Indians, of whatever party or group, I would say that it would be a supreme tragedy if these officers and men were liquidated by way of punishment. Whatever their past mistakes, and these were serious, there can be no doubt that they are a fine body of young men—fine officers and fine rank-and-file members—and that their dominating motive was love for freedom.

At any time, it would have been wrong to treat them too harshly, but at this time, when it is said that big changes are impending in India, it would be a very grave mistake, leading to far-reaching consequences, if they were treated just as ordinary rebels. The punishment inflicted on them will, in effect, be a punishment for the whole of India, and a deep wound will remain in millions of hearts. In this matter, fortunately, there is no communal question, for these officers and men are Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

From such accounts as have come to me, it appears that the Indian National Army first took shape when Singapore was almost surrounded by the Japanese and most of the British officers had left by boats. The Indian army in Malaya was, therefore, left stranded and was completely at the mercy of the Japanese. At that time, a junior officer of the

British Indian army, Sardar Mohan Singh<sup>2</sup>, apparently got in touch with the Japanese Command and organised the remnants of the Indian troops there, which amounted to nearly 70,000. Although Mohan Singh, to some extent, cooperated with the Japanese, he resisted their encroachments and refused to be a mere tool in their hands. After many months, matters came to a crisis and Mohan Singh, who had proved a very efficient and brave organiser, was arrested by the Japanese. Probably, he was executed by the Japanese.<sup>3</sup> This, in itself, shows the curious and anomalous position of the Indian National Army. Its leaders tried to resist the exploitation of their men for Japanese imperialist purposes. How far they succeeded in this, I do not know. But the motive underlying their action comes out clearly, and it is important.

In view of all this, I earnestly trust that no injustice will be done in dealing with these prisoners of war, which will create an additional festering sore in India's mind and heart. With the end of war, the immediate exigency is past and larger considerations should prevail.

2. (b. 1909); in 1941 he was a major in the Punjab Regiment; member of the Rajya Sabha, 1960-66 and 1972-78.

3. In fact, at the end of the Second World War Mohan Singh escaped from jail and went into hiding in Sumatra. Later he surrendered to the British. He was brought to Delhi as a prisoner in November 1945 and was released in May 1946.

### 3. To Dalip Singh<sup>1</sup>

Gulmarg  
August 19, 1945

My dear Dalip Singh,

Thank you for your note.<sup>2</sup> I am disappointed. I shall not ask for a note from you on the subject in view of what you have written. But you will permit me to suggest that in a matter of this kind, in regard to which you and I and many others feel keenly, all of us should do our best to try to save the lives of the gallant men who can be of great use to the country. You made it plain the other night how much you wanted that some thing should be done. So far as I am concerned I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. The note is not available.



shall endeavour to move in the matter in my own sphere of activity. But I am sure your opinion would influence both the public and the Government. There is no reason whatever why you should remain silent on this issue. I suggest, therefore, that you should express that opinion in public, either by a statement or a letter to the press. You need not enter into a legal disquisition on the subject. It is enough to say that the legal aspects are doubtful, to say the least of it, and to stress the human aspect of the problem. Not only you but others, who normally do not function on the political plane, should do this, provided they feel keenly enough on the subject. It is a pity that mere politicians should alone function in matters which are of a much wider interest. In other countries there are large numbers of people, who have no concern with politics, but who are greatly concerned with questions affecting the liberties of the people and vital questions of life and death as well as other public matters. Here unfortunately there is no such class, or the class is dumb. It is about time that it woke up. To some extent in Bengal it is not wholly dumb. I wish you would give a lead in the matter in the Punjab which is most concerned with this impending tragedy. I would like you to induce others to do likewise. A joint statement would certainly have effect. But whether there is a joint statement or not, there is nothing to prevent you from stating your opinion in public.

I am leaving for Srinagar today.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 4. To Govind Ballabh Pant<sup>1</sup>

Srinagar  
August 19, 1945

My dear Pantji,

I have just returned from Gulmarg and received your letter of the 13th together with Gagan Bihari Mehta's.<sup>2</sup> I am leaving Kashmir finally day

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. He had suggested that Jawaharlal should visit the U.S. and Britain to press the case of India's independence and to explain the dangers of partition.

after tomorrow. After various stops at Murree, Nathiagali, Lahore and Delhi I expect to reach Allahabad by the end of the month. At Delhi we are having a *Herald* directors' meeting.

I entirely agree with you about my going abroad. Press messages to this effect have no foundation in fact and I have contradicted them. Gagan Bihari's approach, like that of most businessmen, is very one-sided and concerns itself with meeting important persons and influencing them.

I have no intention whatever of going to England unless there is some very special reason. America is somewhat different, in spite of what Gagan Bihari says. It is different not because of the Government but because it is one of the biggest centres today of international activity and people from every country gather there. Nevertheless I have no intention of going to America either, unless something special happens.

I hope you are better. I am feeling quite fit.

A question that is troubling me and others at present is the fate of a very large number of prisoners of the Indian National Army captured in Burma. I understand that final decisions are likely to take place soon and the life of about three hundred persons, chiefly bright young officers, is involved. Now that the war is ended, the situation is different and I do feel that we must speak out on this subject. I have already said something, though I have seen no report of it yet, and I propose to say more. Probably the Maulana will issue a statement also. The question is an all-India one, though it affects the Punjab most and chiefly the Sikhs and the Muslims. Most well-known Punjabi families have some relationship or other connections with these men. The matter is urgent. Even constitutionally and legally the position is by no means clear. But, of course, the primary consideration is not legal but national and human. I think we should at least demand that the veil of secrecy should be lifted and full opportunities for defence be given. I am writing very briefly to you on this subject as I am in a hurry but I feel strongly and I am convinced the reaction in India will be far-reaching.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal



## 5. Tribute to Subhas Chandra Bose<sup>1</sup>

While the news of the death<sup>2</sup> of Subhas Bose has shocked me, it has given me relief that in the struggle for the cause of India's independence he has given his life and has escaped all those troubles which brave soldiers like him have to face in the end. He was not only brave but had deep love for freedom. He believed, rightly or wrongly, that whatever he did was for the independence of India. The news of his death has again reminded me of my association with him since 1919 when we started working together. Although I personally did not agree with him in many respects, and he left us and formed the Forward Bloc, nobody can doubt his sincerity. He struggled throughout his life for the independence of India, though in his own way.

1. Speech at Abbottabad, 24 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 25 August and *The Hindu*, 26 August 1945.
2. On 16 August 1945, Subhas Bose left Singapore for Tokyo by air and after the plane had taken off from Taipei airport in Taiwan at 2 p.m. on 18 August, it crashed and caught fire. Subhas staggered out of the plane badly burnt and was removed to hospital where he died the same night.

## 6. Warning against Harsh Treatment<sup>1</sup>

I am glad that the Government of India has issued a communique in regard to the prisoners of the Indian National Army formed in Malaya in 1942.<sup>2</sup> The veil at last has been lifted, but facts are still hidden. I would suggest that those facts, or many of them, should be released to the public. What is the total number of officers and prisoners of

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 28 August 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 29 August 1945.
2. On 27 August 1945, the Government announced clemency to the rank and file of the Indian National Army, who had yielded to pressure, but said that it would court-martial leaders "who consciously embraced the Japanese and German cause and those who were guilty of heinous crimes."



I.N.A. DEFENCE COMMITTEE : K.N. KATJU, T.B. SAPRU AND JAWAHARLAL, 1945





MAHATMA GANDHI TALKING TO THE MEN OF THE I.N.A., 1945

this army in the various forts, camps and prisons of India? What action has already been taken in regard to any of them? What were the original circumstances which led to the formation of this army in Malaya? For instance, it has been stated, with what authority I do not know, that they were left there to shift for themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Many points of constitutional law arise and these should be considered carefully by competent experts of this law. It may be maintained that any such army which was formed in the circumstances then existing and recognised by a foreign power as an independent army, gains the status of a combatant force and its prisoners should be treated as ordinary prisoners of war. I am not an expert in constitutional law to give a definite opinion, but I am sure this matter is worthy of earnest consideration.

The main point, however, is not one of law. It depends on the approach to the question. Is it a completely English and non-Indian approach or is it an Indian approach? I can understand and appreciate the English approach, but I can also understand and not only appreciate but deeply feel the Indian approach, which, I think, is adopted not only by the common man in India, but also by the members of the British Indian Army.

The war is over happily for all of us and so any problem must be viewed in terms of peace and not of war. There will be political consequences if any severe punishment is inflicted. There is no doubt that such political consequences will be deep and far-reaching.

In this connection a possible comparison, common though not wholly apposite, is that of the *Maquis*<sup>4</sup> in France. When the German army wanted to deal with the *Maquis* as rebels of the Petain<sup>5</sup> Government, General Eisenhower very rightly issued a stern warning to them and told them that the *Maquis* must be treated as combatant

3. After the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, Col. Hunt, the Commander, on behalf of the British Government, handed over 40,000 Indian soldiers to the Japanese representative, who, addressing the Indian prisoners of war, said that they were no more prisoners from the Japanese point of view, as Japan had declared war on Britain and not on Indians.

4. The French resistance in World War II.

5. Henri Phillippe Petain (1856-1951); in the First World War he halted the Germans at Verdun and became a national hero; in the Second World War he became the Premier and concluded an armistice with Germany after the French collapse in 1940; removing the seat of the Government to Vichy, he established a repressive regime on the fascist model; after the war he was sentenced to death for treason but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.



forces and allowed the privileges of prisoners of war. There can be no doubt that this Indian National Army functioned as a regular, organised, disciplined and uniformed combatant force. There can be no mistake in this. It was unfortunate that many of them were misguided to support a wrong means, but it should never be forgotten that they had no desire or intention of supporting that method. They were moved by their passion for India's freedom.

I have no doubt in my mind that the vast majority of the Indian men and officers of the British Indian Army will appreciate a generous treatment of their old comrades-in-arms.

## 7. Discrimination against Indians<sup>1</sup>

The people of India have been and are concerned with the fate of the officers, men and women of the Indian National Army, who are at present in various prisons in India and in other countries. Probably, the All India Congress Committee will consider this matter.

It has to be remembered that this Indian National Army consisted not only of officers and men from the British Indian Army but also of large numbers of individuals recruited in Burma, Malaya and Siam. Some efforts, I am told, are being made to isolate the civilian elements from the army elements and to treat the former more harshly. This will be highly improper and will naturally be resented. All elements of this army deserve to be considered as combatants and discharged now as the war has ended.

There are also, I understand, a number of Indian soldier-prisoners from various western fronts in the war. They also stand on the same footing as others.

Then there are vast numbers of Indian civilians in South East Asia who joined the Indian Independence League. There must be no discriminatory treatment. Indeed any such treatment will involve punishing the whole people.

1. Interview to the press, Poona, 16 September 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 September 1945.

## 8. Why Differential Treatment?<sup>1</sup>

When the British evacuated Singapore, Burma and Malaya a part of the Indian army was left behind. These troops were instructed by the British to act in a manner which they thought would serve their best interests. With the entry of the Japanese into these territories some of the troops had joined the Indian National Army which was supported by the Japanese. Now the British are back in these territories and, according to the reports received in India, the fate of several officers and men of the army is hanging in the balance. It is rumoured that some of them are being brought before court-martial in Delhi. It is unfair to treat these people on a different footing from that of combatants and prisoners of war after the hostilities are concluded. There is no difference between the role played by the Burman National Army<sup>2</sup> and that of the Indian National Army. There can be no justification for any differential treatment. There are parallel cases in history. After the last war the Czechs who fought against the Germans were recognised as belligerents.<sup>3</sup> How are Indians who have joined the I.N.A. different from them?

The only crime of these young officers is their devotion to their motherland. Any vindictive punishment to them is bound to have repercussions in India. The men of the National Army have their kith and kin in the British Indian Army who cannot but feel keenly over their treatment. We demand that they shall not be prosecuted on charge of treason and punished vindictively. The Working Committee has already decided to have a defence committee so that these patriotic men are properly defended when tried. The committee invites applications from the accused or their relatives to make arrangements for their defence.

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting on 23 September 1945 while moving the resolution on the Indian National Army. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 September 1945.
2. The Patriotic Burmese Force, numbering about 14,000, was originally formed by the Japanese, but when it passed under the control of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League of Burma, it fought to support the Allies against the Axis. This army was later incorporated into the Burmese Army.
3. The Czechs had raised separate armies to fight for their freedom in 1918, though they were the subjects of Austria and Germany which were at war with Britain, France, Italy and the United States, Britain and the U.S. recognised them as belligerents, and their National Council as a *de facto* belligerent government with authority to direct military and political affairs.



## 9. To Raghunandan Saran<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
30 September, 1945

My dear Nandan,

As I have to go to Jaipur for the P.E.N.<sup>2</sup> conference, I might pass through Delhi. I shall try to do so reaching there on the 19th morning and spending that day there. I want to see what arrangements have been made for the I.N.A. cases. If it is possible for me to interview the persons concerned I should like to do so. Could you please ask for the necessary permission on my behalf as a member of the Defence Committee?

I shall only be in Delhi for the day and expect to leave the same evening for Jaipur. You might reserve two second class berths for me to Jaipur on the 19th evening. I shall stay with you in Delhi as this will be most convenient for both of us.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Poets/Playwrights, Essayists/Editors, Novelists (P.E.N.) is an international organisation whose first two presidents were John Galsworthy and H.G. Wells. Its Indian centre, which was sponsoring the Writers' Conference, was started in 1933 by Sophia Wadia in cooperation with Rabindranath Tagore.

## 10. Firing on I.N.A. Prisoners<sup>1</sup>

It has been reported to me that at a camp prison situated at Nilganj near Calcutta, where over 1,000 Indian National Army prisoners are kept, firing<sup>2</sup> took place on or about September 25. It is stated that a large number of rounds were fired by the guards and as a result five

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 10 October 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 October 1945.
2. There was firing at an I.N.A. prisoners' camp at Nilganj on 25 September 1945. Five persons died and many were injured.

of the prisoners died on the spot and many were wounded. I would request the military authorities or others concerned to issue a full statement on this subject for the information of the public.

Firing on prisoners within the four walls of a prison is always a dreadful thing. I should like to know if any inquiry has been held into this occurrence and if so what have been the findings and results of this inquiry.

## 11. The I.N.A. Defence Committee<sup>1</sup>

The special purpose of the I.N.A. Defence Committee is to defend those who may be put up for trial, but we are naturally interested in the fate of all I.N.A. men, who may be discharged and left stranded. We are specially interested in those families, which have lost their bread-winners, who were in the I.N.A. and suffered death or disabilities. We wish to do our utmost to trace these people. This is a difficult task but it can be done with the cooperation of the public.

Question: Would the I.N.A. Defence Committee take up the question of defending I.N.A. men in Burma and Malaya,<sup>2</sup> who may be tried?

Jawaharlal Nehru: This inquiry falls outside the scope of the present Defence Committee, and so arrangements will have to be made separately. We have not so far been able to contact them, but we hope to be able to make some arrangement there also.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 26 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 27 October 1945.
2. About 1000 I.N.A. men were then in custody in Rangoon completely cut off from their relatives or friends. In Malaya, a large number of prosecutions had been started by the British Military Administration against the members of the I.N.A. and the Indian Independence League.



## 12. Demand for Facts<sup>1</sup>

I understand that a number of Indians<sup>2</sup> are at present in Delhi jail sentenced to death under the Enemy Agent's Ordinance<sup>3</sup> and waiting execution. Some have already been executed under this ordinance. No one is allowed to say, or publish, anything about these trials or sentences under pain of heavy penalties. So I do not know the facts and circumstances of these trials which have resulted in death sentences.

One might understand secrecy during wartime, but it is utterly improper to have this secret and hush-hush procedure when the enemies have ceased to exist. If the enemy ceases to exist, so must also the Enemy Agent's Ordinance. It is upto the Government to give all the facts in this case and to provide opportunities for such defence as may be possible even at this late stage.

From a legal point of view the validity of the Ordinance may itself be questionable, but, apart from this, where lives of young men are involved, it is objectionable to follow a casual and secret procedure, when there is absolutely no reason for it. I invite the Government to publish all the facts.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 26 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 27 October 1945.
2. About 17,000 men of the I.N.A. were brought to India from East Asia as prisoners of war and a large number of them were lodged in the Red Fort, Delhi, and the Kabul Lines in the New Delhi cantonment. It was reported that six of them were shot in the Red Fort.
3. During the war, civilian foreigners in India, mostly from Germany and Italy, were kept in detention for security reasons under the Enemy Agent's Ordinance.

## 13. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Moradabad  
27.10.45

My dear Krishna,

Yesterday I spent a few hours in Delhi after a strenuous tour in some States of Rajputana. This visit of mine to these feudal States was an

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

eye-opener. Even these backward States have developed political consciousness to a remarkable degree during the past few years and the crowds that welcomed me were tremendous. Even the ruling Princes, sensing perhaps the change as well as the future that was taking shape, behaved differently and went out of their way to be friendly to me.

In Delhi I learnt that a cousin of mine, B.K. Nehru, is soon going by air on some official mission to Paris. I do not yet know what this business is—probably he will function as a secretary of some delegation or commission. He is in the I.C.S. and has been functioning in the Government of India. Perhaps you may have met him. He was one of Laski's pupils about a dozen years ago. As he is going to London first I am taking advantage of his visit to send this letter to you.

As you perhaps know the Congress has appointed a defence committee for the trials by court-martial of I.N.A. officers and men. This consists of a number of eminent lawyers and ex-judges—Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Bhulabhai Desai, Dalip Singh, Tek Chand, Asaf Ali etc. I am a lay member of the committee and so is Raghunandan Saran. This trial commences on Nov. 5th in Delhi Red Fort of three officers: Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon. Other trials may follow. Sehgal is the son of Achhut Ram at present judge of the Lahore High Court; the other two are members of well known Punjab military families.

I was the first person to raise this question of the I.N.A. Since then interest in it has grown and it is today one of the major issues before the country. The Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Sikh League have all lined up with the Congress in this matter because of the public interest and excitement. But the burden of doing anything, as usual, falls upon the Congress. It is a big job, obviously much more than a mere legal defence. I have seldom seen any question seizing the public imagination so rapidly and so deeply. Curiously enough the regular Indian army is as much exercised over it as any civilian. I have had numerous evidences of this.

I cannot enter into the details of the present case. I understand that Raghunandan Saran has sent you some papers already and he might send you some more. The I.N.A. men and officers are a fine lot. They are brave, stout-hearted and capable and very politically minded and do not much care what happens to them individually. They cut across all communal and religious boundaries. All manner of intricate questions of international law arise and behind all these questions of law lie the dramatic facts in India, Malaya and Burma which preceded the formation of the I.N.A. They remained a separate army and refused to be exploited by the Japanese. Their retirement from Assam to Bangkok—3000 miles—without food or equipment, is being



referred to by British officers as a masterpiece of military tactics and strategy. At the end they preferred sacrificing themselves to deserting the large Indian populations of Burma and Malaya whom they protected to the end. They handed over Rangoon to the British forces as a going peaceful concern and there was not the slightest untoward incident. Contrast this with the British withdrawal from Burma in 1942 when Rangoon was partly destroyed, left burning, and the lunatics and criminals let out. There is no doubt that the I.N.A. protected the large Indian populations in South East Asia. Even today they are full of spirit.

The Government of India is now regretting very much this step they have taken in having a public trial. This issue is becoming a dominant one and the demand everywhere is for their release. Whatever happens in the trial, the Government stands to lose heavily.

We do not know exactly how many people of the I.N.A. have been put in prison—probably 20,000 or 30,000. There are a large number of camps spread out all over the country. There was firing in one of them recently resulting in some deaths of the prisoners and other incidents are frequent.

I do not know what you can do in the matter, or whether you can do anything at all. But in view of the importance of the issue you should keep yourself informed and in touch with these developments which are likely to play an increasing part in the future. Of course the great majority of the I.N.A. prisoners will be discharged. What will happen to them? They are penniless, all their funds normally due to them have been withheld. These thousands spreading out all over the country will make a difference, perhaps a great difference, for they are hard as nails, very anti-British, and politically-minded. Generally they look to the Congress for leadership. We propose to give them relief but it is going to be a big job.

To some extent this applies to the soldiers going to be demobilized from the regular army. They will not easily fit in and they also look to the Congress.

There is another matter of some urgency. One man, S.N. Chopra<sup>2</sup>, who used to belong to the Indian Independence League of Burma etc. came to India last year. He has been sentenced to death by a special tribunal sitting in Delhi Fort. An appeal to the Lahore High Court has been rejected. Now an appeal has been preferred to the Privy

2. (b. 1916); after independence joined the Indian Foreign Service and served for some time as high commissioner to New Zealand and ambassador to Norway and Iceland.

Council. I think Polak is in charge. All this has been done very secretly and the relatives and counsel have been threatened with Section 16 of the Enemy Agent's Ordinance in case they talk about the case to others. There must be no communications except through Government.

Some of Chopra's group have already been executed. Yesterday I met Chopra's brother and suggested to him that he might engage you also for the Privy Council hearing. The poor boy knows nothing about these matters and is dazed by threats held out to him.

There is a possibility of a *habeas corpus* application being made in Chopra's case in Lahore, and the validity of the Enemy Agent's Ordinance being challenged.

About this matter also I do not know what you can do. But you should know the facts and judge for yourself. You can spend any money over this or the I.N.A. matter and it will be sent to you later. Meanwhile, you can utilise such monies as you hold on my behalf. You may have to send cables etc. The best man in regard to both these matters is Raghunandan Saran, 6 Metcalfe Road, Delhi.

In haste —

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

#### 14. To Krishna Kripalani<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
October 30, 1945

My dear Krishna,

It struck me that if Gurudeva had been alive he would have given the lead in regard to the I.N.A. matter. Unfortunately we have not got him with us, but there is no reason why prominent intellectuals, educationists, scientists, literary men and others should not express themselves on the subject. We should try to do our best to get every section of the population to help in this matter. I wonder if you could

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.



take this up. I am enclosing a draft statement.<sup>2</sup> This of course can be changed.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Thank you for your book. I am afraid I just cannot find time to read books at present but I should like to read yours.

2. The following item.

### **15. The Unanimous Demand for Release<sup>1</sup>**

The trial of some officers of the Indian National Army formed in Malaya and Burma and the fate of thousands of other officers and men of that army have aroused interest and anxiety all over India. The principal organizations and parties in India, such as the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Akali Dal, the All India Women's Conference, and the Unionist Party of the Punjab, have stated that, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, these officers and men should have been treated as prisoners of war and released at the end of the war. Seldom has there been such a unanimity of opinion in India over any important question as there exists today in regard to the demand for the release of the I.N.A. officers and men. That opinion is expressed not only in the cities but even in the villages and extends to both the civil and military population of the country. Behind that opinion lies a deep anxiety for the fate of those people.

We, who are signing this statement, do not normally function on the political plane and are occupied with other activities. But whether we are politicians or not, we inevitably share the deeply felt sentiments of our people, and, in this matter of the I.N.A., we wish to associate ourselves with the widespread demand for their release. We are not competent to consider and judge the intricate questions of international law which these trials involve

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This undated statement, however, was not released to the press.

and, in any event, it would be improper for us to express any opinion in regard to these questions. We feel, however, that there are aspects of the trials, other than the legal, which are of even greater importance. There can be little doubt of the patriotic motives of the officers and men of the I.N.A. and their desire to protect their own people from the effects of Japanese occupation and the criminal elements which war lets loose. They were moved by the desire to free India. These motives must inevitably be appreciated by every Indian.

There is a striking parallel between the I.N.A. and the Burma National Army. As is well known the latter has been treated differently and allowed to retain its freedom. We see no reason why the I.N.A. should be treated otherwise. There are many other instances of a like kind which can be found in the recent history of other countries.

We feel that at any time harsh treatment of the I.N.A. would have had unfortunate results. At the present time, when far-reaching constitutional changes are expected to take place in the near future, any action taken in opposition to the deeply felt wishes of all sections of the Indian people, can only lead to disastrous consequences, embittering the future relations of India and England.

We trust therefore that in the interest of present and future goodwill the officers and men of the I.N.A. will be released.

## 16. To J. Leon D'Souza<sup>1</sup>

1st November 1945

Dear Mr. D'Souza,<sup>2</sup>

I received your letter of October 22nd on my return to Allahabad. I am glad that the Mayor of Bombay has taken the initiative in opening a relief fund for the I.N.A. As you perhaps know a very large number of persons are involved, probably 20,000. Then there are the dependents of those who died. To support them, educate their children, find work etc. is a very big job which we cannot shirk.

1. Extracts from Maharashtra Govt. Records, Police Commissioner's Office, File No. 3590/H/II-2.
2. Leon D'Souza was joint secretary of a committee set up by the Mayor of Bombay on 17 October 1945 to arrange relief for members of the I.N.A. and their families and dependents.



In Delhi we have an I.N.A. Defence Committee. In addition we are now having a seperate I.N.A. Inquiry Committee which will gather particulars of all these people. Already we are giving relief to a number of people. Every day some are released. They are spread out all over India, though the majority come from the Punjab.

I have met the three officers who are going to be tried. I have also met a number of men who have been released. I have been especially struck by their fine bearing. They are men of whom any nation can be proud.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 17. Note on the I.N.A. Defence Committee<sup>1</sup>

Delhi  
November 2, 1945

1. The Indian National Army Defence Committee was formed by a resolution of the Working Committee of the A.I.C.C. passed in Bombay on September 21, 1945. It consisted originally of six members but they were given power to add to their numbers. Accordingly additional members were coopted.

2. The immediate work of the Defence Committee was to undertake the defence of these persons: Messrs Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon who were to be tried by court-martial for various offences under military law. These three accused persons expressed their willingness to be defended by this committee and the work was immediately taken in hand. An office of the committee was opened at 82 Daryaganj, Delhi, staff was engaged, and interviews with the accused took place in the Red Fort. Messrs Asaf Ali (the convenor) and Raghunandan Saran were in charge of the arrangements in Delhi.

3. Almost from the very beginning, the work of the Defence Committee began to expand itself and inquiries of all kinds began to reach its office. This work can be divided under the following heads:

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

- (i) Actual defence of Messrs Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon and matters connected with it, including publicity.
- (ii) Defence of other I.N.A. personnel who may subsequently be charged with offences before a court-martial.
- (iii) Defence of Indian P.O.W.s who functioned as an I.N.A. in Europe.
- (iv) Defence or other assistance of I.N.A. personnel or other civilians in the Indian Independence League in Malaya and Burma.
- (v) Defence or other steps to be taken in regard to persons accused or sentenced under the Enemy Agent's Ordinance.
- (vi) Answers to inquiries about I.N.A. personnel at present in various camps or prisons in India.
- (vii) Help, including monetary assistance, to I.N.A. personnel who are being discharged from day-to-day from camps and prisons.
- (viii) The maintenance of proper registers containing full information about I.N.A. personnel in prison and detention and those discharged.
- (ix) Collection of information regarding I.N.A. officers and men who have died during campaigns or otherwise; their home addresses, the necessity of relief for their widows, children or other members of the family.
- (x) Collection of funds for the various purposes named above.
- (xi) General publicity.

(Note : The I.N.A. should be understood to include those who acted similarly in Europe.)

4. It is obvious that all this taken together is a huge undertaking and involves a great deal of organisation and funds and a number of competent workers. It is something much more than pure legal defence, though it indirectly affects it in various ways. The trials involve the lives of young men but, apart from that important personal aspect, they have a public aspect, and this latter affects the personal aspect also.

5. It is desirable to divide all this work and to separate the legal defence aspect from the others. The present defence should then confine itself to legal defence and connected matters. Thus in the list given in paragraph 3 it should undertake to deal with (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) and (v). Another committee or committees should be entrusted with the work coming under the other heads.

6. I suggest, therefore, that two other committees be formed: The Indian National Army Inquiry and Relief Committee and the Indian



National Army Funds Committee. The work of the Funds Committee is indicated by its name; it will be the collection of funds and their allotment to the two other committees. The Inquiry and Relief Committee will deal with heads vi, vii, viii, ix, and xi of paragraph 3 above.

7. It will probably not be desirable for the present Defence Committee to appoint these two additional committees as sub-committees of itself. The Defence Committee was appointed chiefly for legal defence and the other questions are somewhat outside its purview. These other committees might well include names of some persons who are not at present members of the Defence Committee, as well as some of those who are such members. Perhaps the best course is for us to ask the Congress President to nominate these two additional committees. We may, if we so choose, recommend names, or some names.

8. The work of the Defence Committee and that of the Inquiry and Relief Committee will sometimes overlap to some extent, and in any event there will have to be close contact and cooperation between them. It is desirable, however, for them to have separate offices and separate staff. The offices should be situated close to each other.

9. Apart from the normal work of the Defence Committee, that is the organisation of the defence in the trial commencing on November 5, and subsequent trials in Delhi, I suggest that some steps be taken immediately in regard to heads (iv) and (v) of paragraph 3 above.

10. Head (iv) deals with Indians in Malaya and Burma. It is known that Raghavan and Goho and others are in prison and may be tried soon. It is also known that the Indian civilian population, or at any rate those connected with the I.I.L., are being harassed in many ways. Very little information is available and communications are difficult. I suggest that we ask the Government of India to:

(i) Supply us with information regarding members of the Indian National Army and the I.I.L. who may be in prison or detention, or who are going to be tried. Further that we should be given facilities to organize their defence.

(ii) Permit a representative of our committee to visit Burma and Malaya, to meet people there, especially those who are going to be tried or are being interrogated and are in prison or detention, and to collect all relevant information.

(iii) Enable us to communicate freely by cable and letter with persons in Burma and Malaya who are interested in the defence of these people.

11. I have already written and suggested to friends in Malaya to organize a defence committee there. But conditions there are unstable; there is military rule and most people appear to be incapable of taking the initiative in anything. So, for the moment, I do not expect much of a response. But if a representative of ours went there, I am sure his presence would revive the spirit of the people.

12. Head(v) of paragraph 3 deals with persons accused or sentenced under the Enemy Agent's Ordinance. We are informed that there are some people in the Delhi jail now, sentenced to death under this ordinance. (Some have already been executed). Their appeals to the Lahore High Court were rejected and an attempt has been made to appeal to the Privy Council—hence the postponement of their execution. Under the Enemy Agent's Ordinance it is an offence for anyone, relative or counsel, to disclose anything about the case. Hence nothing can be known formally, though it is possible to get the main facts through other channels. I suggest that the Defence Committee write to the Government of India asking for information of these cases and facilities for defence. In view of the end of the war, there is no point in maintaining secrecy. It has also been proposed that a *habeas corpus* application be filed in the Lahore High Court challenging the validity of the Enemy Agent's Ordinance. The persons at present in Delhi District Jail under sentence of death, so far as is known, are S.N. Chopra, Shri Bhagwat, Kartar Singh, Kanwal Singh and Ram Dulare.

13. We have so far not appealed for funds. Shri Raghunandan Saran was good enough to agree to meet the initial expenses of the Defence Committee. Obviously large funds are necessary, not so much for the actual defence as for the inquiry and relief work. An appeal for funds has therefore to be made. On whose behalf this should be made, it is for the committee to consider. In Bombay the Mayor has opened a fund for I.N.A. relief. This fund has so far no connection with our committee. I have found that people are eager to subscribe and during my recent tour I have received over Rs. 10,000 for I.N.A. defence and relief.

14. We have appointed no treasurer yet though Shri Raghunandan Saran has been acting as such. I suggest that we appoint him the treasurer of the I.N.A. Defence Committee.

Jawaharlal Nehru



**18. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>**

Delhi  
3.11.45

My dear Krishna,

I am writing to you about an important matter relating to the I.N.A. trial beginning here on Nov. 5. Presumably you know that a "Provisional Government of Free India" was ormed at Singapore on October 21st 1943 with Subhas Chandra Bose as the Head of the State. The Government was recognised by Japan, Germany, Italy, Siam, Nanking, Manchukuo, Philippines etc. Diplomatic representatives were exchanged with Japan and messages of goodwill were received from the other States. Some time during the last week of October or in November 1943, we are reliably informed that de Valera also sent a congratulatory message, presumably through the radio or possibly by cable, to Subhas Bose.<sup>2</sup> We have been unable to get the text or other particulars of this message. We have asked the Government of India to find out for us.

I am writing to you to find out at the other end about this message sent by President de Valera. You can ask the Irish representative in London to be good enough to find this out for us or you can send someone to Dublin for this purpose. The matter is urgent.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Subhas Bose sent a communication through the Japanese consul in Dublin to the Irish Government which was acknowledged.

**19. Unauthorised Collection for the Defence Fund<sup>1</sup>**

The I.N.A. trials have gripped the public imagination to such an extraordinary degree that there is a widespread desire to contribute to the

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 16 November 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 17 November 1945.

defence fund. Money flows in unasked from all quarters, and reports reach me of numerous separate collections. There is some danger of unauthorised collections or unauthorised use of collections. It is desirable therefore that those who wish to contribute should send their donations to recognised organisations.

The central committees formed by the Congress for the purpose are situated in Delhi. There are three such committees, namely, the I.N.A. Defence Committee, the I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee and the I.N.A. Funds Committee. The treasurer of all these committees is Shri Raghunandan Saran and the offices are situated at 82, Daryaganj, Delhi.

Then there is a Mayor's Fund for I.N.A. relief in Bombay and I understand that Shri Sarat Chandra Bose has organised a relief committee in Calcutta. All these are responsible organisations to whom money for I.N.A. defence and relief should be sent. In addition donations earmarked for the purpose may be sent to the A.I.C.C. office, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, or to any of the provincial Congress committee offices.

## 20. To Sarat Chandra Bose<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
16-11-1945

My dear Sarat,

Thank you for your telegram of good wishes. It is not pleasant to get older but it is very pleasant to have the affection and goodwill of old friends.

I have just returned from Bombay. The train was 9 hours late and terribly crowded. Within a few hours I am going to Lucknow and from there to the Punjab.

I have been wanting to go to Bengal but fate has so far prevented this. Anyway I hope to go there early next month when we shall surely meet.

You might have noticed that apart from this I.N.A. Defence Committee, an I.N.A. inquiry and relief committee is being constituted. Maulana issued a statement about it some days ago but till now the

1. Maharashtra Government, Home Department (Special), Intercepted letters.



committee has not been formed. Probably Maulana will announce it soon. I hope you will agree to be a member of it. Vallabhbhai is going to be a member.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

## 21. To Sri Prakasa<sup>1</sup>

28/11/45

My dear Prakasa,

I have your letter. I agree with much that you have written about the deterioration of our public life and our internal Congress organisation. Nothing has worried me so much in recent years as this. Always I have had to face this trouble. What to do? What is the lesser evil? To remain passive is impossible for me especially in present circumstances, and so always I have to choose some line of action.

About Paliwal's book<sup>2</sup> — I have only just seen the extracts — it is very bad form — that is Paliwal's way. He has explained and expressed his regret and said that he did not mean his general remarks to refer to you or Sampurnanand. He has further promised to clear this up. We have thereupon passed a resolution expressing our confidence in you and Sampurnanand and requesting you to withdraw your resignation. I think that you should agree to this in the larger interest. We have to put up with much we don't like. So do not stick to your resignation. We cannot afford to injure our cause because of personal considerations. You know that most of us have a great deal of affection for you and confidence in you even though we may disagree on some particular points. Ultimately it is this confidence and *bona fides* that count.

Reading your letter, it struck me that you should do some more worthwhile and solid work than you appear to be doing. I know you have plenty of things to do but are they so important as to give you

1. Sri Prakasa Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. In his book *Hamara Swadhinthe Sangram* (Our Freedom Struggle), Paliwal charged Sri Prakasa and Sampurnanand of being on friendly terms with British officials in 1943.

a sense of satiety? I gather from your letter that they do not. We have at present very important and evergrowing work — the I.N.A. inquiry & relief — which is likely to assume big dimensions and have important political consequences. It requires just the qualities which you possess in such an eminent degree. I wish you would take it up. That work would mean your spending a good deal of time in Delhi. For the moment, I am thinking in terms of three months or so only. During this period, or soon after, many changes may take place and so it is not worthwhile planning further ahead. Even if you cannot remain in Delhi for all this time, I would like you to take it up. It is difficult to explain the nature and intricacy of the work in a letter. If I have the chance I should like to talk to you about it. I discussed this matter with Narendra Deva and Rafi and both liked the idea of your taking up this I.N.A. work. I might add that this has nothing to do with the defence proper. It relates to the gathering of full information and the giving of relief. Our office is functioning in Delhi but your presence there will make all the difference.

The council today selected you to represent them in I.N.A. relief work in Delhi. This does not cover what I have in mind.

I am going to Delhi on the 30th midday by the Toofan Express, reaching Delhi early on the 1st. I shall spend only one day there and return to Allahabad the same night. If it was possible for you to accompany me to Delhi then, it would give us a chance of a talk and you could yourself see things for yourself in Delhi. So try to come. If you go to Delhi you need not return with me the same day.

Love,

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

## 22. To the Home Member, Government of India<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
November 30, 1945

Dear Sir,

On October 9 last I sent you a telegram and a letter requesting that passport and travel facilities be granted to me for visiting Java. To

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.



that I have had no reply so far. But I was told by H.E. the Viceroy that this would not be possible in present circumstances.

I am now writing to you to inquire if it is possible to extend these facilities to me for visiting Burma and Malaya. I have received many pressing invitations from friends in those countries who are in distress and I should like to respond to them and to help them if I can. I would therefore be grateful if a new passport is issued to me and travel facilities to visit Burma and Malaya granted. My old passport expired about a year ago but, in any event, I suppose old passports do not count.

I am also writing to the Chief Secretary of the U.P. Government on this subject and sending him my old passport for renewal.

I shall be grateful if you will be good enough to send me an early reply.

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**23. To the Chief Sovretary, Government of U.P.<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
November 30, 1945

Dear Sir,

I am sending you separately under registered cover my old passport which expired on October 31, 1944. I shall be grateful if this is renewed. For the present or the near future I am likely to require it only for Burma and Malaya. But there is always a possibility of my visiting other countries and so I shall be glad if the passport is renewed and made valid for all the countries mentioned in it. That validity, I take it, will be subject to such restrictions on travel or visiting particular countries as may still exist.

As a visit to Burma or Malaya probably requires special permission and facilities, I am also writing to the Home Member, Government of India, on the subject.

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence. N.M.M.I..

24. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
December 2, 1945

My dear Krishna,

I have not written to you for some time. I have been so constantly on the move and so desperately busy with all manner of things that it is exceedingly difficult to write letters. I have just come back by air from Delhi and day after tomorrow I shall be going to Calcutta for Congress Working Committee and other meetings. I am not likely to be back for a fortnight or more as I might have to go to Assam. Then there is some talk of my going to the other end of India — Sind. On the 31st December and subsequent days I preside over the All India States People's Conference at Udaipur in Rajputana. After that I suppose the elections will take up a good deal of my time.

I am snatching a few moments to write to you briefly about some matters. I have your letters of the 12th and 26th November as well as the papers sent to you by the Irish High Commissioner. I met Anrit Kaur yesterday in Delhi and had a long talk with her.

(1) About the Irish papers our own information confirms what you have said and nothing more need be done about it.

(2) The Chopra matter is already more or less over so far as I know. Evidently you were under some slight misapprehension about this. The matter was brought to my and Saran's notice at a late stage, after a lawyer in Lahore, Jivanlal Kapoor<sup>2</sup>, had already instructed Polak. It was then that I wrote to you about it. You need not tell me anything about Polak or Khambatta. I quite agree with your opinion and I would not entrust any matter to them. I told Jivanlal Kapoor as much. Raghunandan Saran is not a lawyer but a colleague in Delhi who is at present especially engaged in I.N.A. defence work as treasurer. He owns a big motor firm there and is one of our directors of the *National Herald*. He could not therefore instruct you in the matter. He passed on the information to Jivanlal Kapoor but before anything could be done the persons concerned were reprieved. There was no point then in pursuing the Privy Council appeal which was anyhow rather weak.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (b. 1897); a leading advocate of Lahore; arrested during the salt satyagraha; Vice-President, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, 1929-30; Judge, Punjab High Court, 1948, and of the Supreme Court, 1957; Chairman, Law Commission, 1961-67.



(3) Amrit Kaur and Zakir Hussain are both, as you found them, unusual and interesting persons. Zakir Hussain's special job is of course education. He has kept away from politics.

(4) I have sent you the whole manuscript of my book in batches. Soon I hope to send you the book in proof forms. All I have to do now is to add a postscript of a few pages and a preface. It has been a hard task for me to revise the typescript or the proofs. Ultimately I gave it up and Indira has been largely responsible for this. I expect the book will be published by the Signet Press, Calcutta, in about six weeks time.

(5) You ask me to send you my article in *Fortune* as well as other material. I shall try to find that article though it is no easy matter. As for other material also there is really very little for I wrote nothing for three years. If I can lay my hand on anything I shall send it to you.

(6) You are perfectly right in saying that my various activities here are taking up all my time. But I still continue to be receptive to suggestions. You are best able to judge the position in England and elsewhere. Here matters have advanced at a very rapid pace during the last five months. This pace was rapid enough anyhow after the suppression of some years. It was given a push by the freshly organised All India Students Congress which has become by far the most important student organization in the country. Then came the I.N.A. trial which has caught the public imagination to an amazing degree. All these factors plus the stay-put attitude of the British Government in regard to India and the continuing repressive policy in regard to a large number of political prisoners have incensed public opinion. The Central and Provincial governments have become notorious for their incompetence and corruption. There is a feeling of desperation in the air and a spark may lead to a fire, as recently took place in Calcutta. There is a great deal of indiscipline about the younger people which is regrettable and yet which one can understand. It is the normal result of suppression and resistance movements, mostly underground in the recent past. It is also partly the result of the Congress organization having become rather stale and out of date and not giving opportunities to newer elements to function through it. Owing to various obvious reasons there have been no elections in the Congress for five years and till new elections take place, necessarily after the Assembly elections, there is likely to be this hiatus. Apart from this of course there are all manner of conflicting elements and ideologies within and near the Congress which produce a great deal of confusion. The Congress has in a sense never been so popular with the masses of people as it is today. To some extent even Muslim masses

are affected by this, specially the rural masses. At the same time there is an inner weakening in the Congress and many of us are worried about this. I suppose this is a common feature of resistance movements in all countries. The future *vis-a-vis* the British is that there is intense resentment and anger against them and it should be remembered that this is shared by the regular army. I do not think any real conflict is going to take place till the provincial elections are over. At any rate we shall do our best to avoid it. After that much depends on the British Government's attitude. One thing is certain that people here are not put going to wait and see for long.

(7) The I.N.A. trial, as I have said, has excited enormous attention and sympathy from all kinds and classes of people. A little over three months ago I spoke first on this issue. Knowing something of my people I realised that this was going to become a major issue. And I said as much. But the way events developed rapidly surprised me. The Government here, as usual, completely misjudged the position and sought to make capital for themselves out of this trial. And now they are in a hopeless quandary for the result has been the exact opposite and even the regular army has in a very large number of instances expressed its sympathy with the I.N.A. Two days ago Government issued a communique on this subject which shows that they have retracted greatly from their original position. There is practically no question now of any charge of waging war against the King against any of these people. This should naturally lead to the withdrawal of the case against Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon, for they are not personally accused of any so-called atrocity. A number of other cases will be started on charges of "atrocities" against certain individuals. Meanwhile, rather gruesome stories of ill-treatment of I.N.A. people—officers and men in various camps—continue to reach us. Two officers in a camp near Delhi have recently committed suicide because of this treatment. One prominent officer, Ahsan Qadir, the son of Sir Abdur Qadir, is mentally deranged.

(8) All the evidence in the case as well as all other facts that have reached us make it quite clear that I.N.A. people were continually resisting Japanese interference and many of them got into trouble because of this. There is no doubt that they were moved as a whole by the desire to help in the freedom movement of India and were anxious at the same time not to help in any way Japanese ambition and designs. It was a difficult position of course and the two could not always be separated. There is also no doubt that the I.N.A. saved thousands of Indian lives and property both from the Japanese and from local hooligan elements in Burma and Malaya. They did their work very efficiently and were tremendously popular with the civil population including Bur-



mese and Malayans. They succeeded in solving, within their own ranks, the communal problem completely which is an object lesson of what can be done if external interference is removed. Yesterday in Delhi I had a long talk with Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief, who had expressed a desire to see me. In the main he talked to me about a scheme of army re-organization. But in the course of our talk he said that he could well understand the difficulty of the position of the Indian army after the surrender in Singapore. In a way he seemed to understand, if not wholly to appreciate, the subsequent developments there.

(9) There is no doubt now that Subhas Bose died in an aeroplane crash in Formosa in August last. We have an eyewitness of the accident here — Col. Habibur Rahman who was with Subhas Bose in the plane at the time and managed to escape with minor burns and injuries. Habibur Rahman is at present in one of the internment camps under interrogation. He has sent us one or two personal effects of Subhas Bose, especially a wristwatch, which shows signs of burning.

(10) Obviously a large force like the I.N.A. contains all kinds of men. But taking it as a whole it was a fine body of men and women, capable, intensely patriotic and politically conscious. The real problem before us is what to do with these tens of thousands of young men, many of them technicians. It is a big problem and we are trying to tackle it by finding out avenues of employment for them. That is no easy matter just now when the army is being demobilized and many wartime industries are being closed. Nevertheless there is a tremendous desire on the part of many people to help.

(11) Apart from the trials, the I.N.A. problems before us are the proper treatment of the men in prison or internment in India and the fate of thousands of Indians in Malaya and Burma. Reports continually reach us about large numbers of Indians being arrested and imprisoned in these countries, most of them civilians who belonged to the Indian Independence League there. We are trying to organise their defence, but unless we send men there it is not an easy matter. We have asked Government for permission to send our representatives to Burma and Malaya. I have personally also asked for permission for myself. You know that I was refused permission to go to Java.

(12) Recent months have brought about a rather remarkable change in the feeling of the civilian population towards the regular Indian army as well as of the army towards the others. This is rather an odd consequence of the I.N.A. trial. After long years of isolation and separation and suspicion there is an increasing friendliness between the two. Obviously this is an important development which should be welcomed. It is our desire to put up for election in the provinces some demobilized

officers if we can find suitable men. Unfortunately the names of most of these people are not to be found on the electoral rolls.

(13) As for the future, after the elections, it is difficult for me to say much. Obviously the two immediate issues that arise will be the re-organisation of the Central Government and the constitution of the constituent assembly. If both these are done in a satisfactory manner soon after the elections no immediate crisis need arise. But it is highly doubtful whether the British Government will even then take the right step. If there is delay or a wrong step is taken by them, a crisis arises and anything may happen. It is clear that the Provincial Governments are not going to function for long with an autocratic centre. I do not for a moment suggest how these two matters should be tackled, although the broad principles are clear enough. Anyhow we are giving some thought to the matter for we want to be ready to take the initiative if there is any delay on the other side.

(14) The Central Assembly elections have resulted as expected in an overwhelming victory for the Congress in the general seats and a substantial victory for the Muslim League in the Muslim seats. But there is something more to be said. We did not take the Muslim elections very seriously because of the restricted electorates and a very bad electoral roll. Also there was some confusion as to whether the Congress should run its candidates or the Nationalist Muslims. In fact we started our election campaign only a few days before the polling. We found a surprising response among rural masses to the Congress. The Muslim League spent vast sums of money and there are many reports of bribery as well as intimidation by petty Government officials. The effect of these elections has convinced us that we shall put up a good show in the provincial elections. The probability is that the Congress will have a clear majority in all the provinces except three — Punjab, Bengal and Sind. In none of these three provinces is the Muslim League likely to have the majority. So there cannot be a clear Muslim League government in any province. At the most there can be coalition governments in these three provinces.

(15) I had a letter from Sir Stafford Cripps the other day in answer to a note of mine. In this he pleaded for faith till the elections were over. There is no faith but, as I have said above, we expect no major developments till after the elections. For my part I agree with your analysis of the situation in England. I also agree with you about our necessity for further international contacts and work in England. But for the moment I cannot suggest any definite steps. I am rather suspect in regard to these matters. Amrit Kaur might be able to help a little, or so I gather from her talk.



(16) It is exceedingly unfortunate that the Communist Party in India has drifted further away from the nationalist movement. Their position today is one of absolute hostility to the Congress and of practical alliance with the Muslim League. Quite apart from the merits of any question it is obvious that it is entirely wrong to oppose the entire trend of the national movement which represents the most vital urge of the Indian people. The result has been the growth of an intense opposition to the Communist Party in India which often takes undesirable forms and helps the wrong people. Communists here have become terribly isolated and have developed the complexes of narrowness of outlook and isolationism. They take one wrong step after another in trying to justify themselves. It is a great pity and I do not know what to do about it.

(17) The *National Herald* at last came out two days ago. We have to face very great difficulties specially the lack of trained operators for whom there is a great demand all over the country. We have ordered additional machinery etc. from America. The next four months are likely to be difficult. The competition is severe and our resources are limited. All newspapers in India, good or bad, made large sums of money during the war. Not we of course. *The Statesman's* reserves, I am told, run into crores. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, in order to forestall the *Herald*, arranged for a special aeroplane service to carry the *Patrika* to Cawnpore and Lucknow every morning at a cost of Rs. 15,000 a month. If we had an extra fifteen thousand with us we could use it to much better purpose.

(18) There is talk of the Parliamentary Delegation coming to India. If such a thing materialises let me have some information of the personnel. I understand Brailsford is also coming soon.

This is a longer letter than I had intended. I may not be able to write to you again for some time.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

## 25. The Army—Part of India<sup>1</sup>

No great political development can be expected until after the elections. After the elections, however, the administration will be expected to form

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 2 December 1945. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 4 December and *The Hindu*, 4 December 1945.

a government at the Centre representing the democratic forces within the country as shown by the elections. The next step will be the setting up of a constituent assembly which will frame the constitution that India wants. I do not say that a wholly independent government can be expected at once, but early action is what I have in mind. If the Government does not act, it will be for other people to take the initiative.

Question: What effect does the I.N.A. have on the Indian people?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The history of the I.N.A. and the current trials have brought the army closer to the people. Another contributing factor to this is the wide base of the enrolment in the army during the war. Whereas at one time most Indians considered the army as something not connected with them and almost foreign to them, now it is being brought home to them that the army is part of India.

Q: Do you think that failure to punish the I.N.A. officers might result in a weakening of the morale of the members of the Indian Army who did not join the I.N.A.?

JN: On the contrary, I feel that the army is keenly interested in seeing that the I.N.A. people are not punished. Contributions are coming from within the ranks of the army to support the defence of the I.N.A. members. These amounts have come from soldiers and young officers in sums of Re. 1 to Rs. 20 and an occasional contribution of Rs. 50.

Q: Will there not be any opposition at all from the services to the pardoning of the I.N.A. officers?

JN: I agree that there is perhaps a small number of Indians in the army who feel that the I.N.A. personnel should be punished.

I feel that the stories of heroism of the I.N.A. men have led many young Indians to question the value of nonviolence. Many of them are now thinking about the possibility of force as against the method of nonviolence as a means of gaining independence. This is a subject of considerable thought and discussion on the part of the Congress leaders also who believe that force is in direct conflict with Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence.

I regret that Indians are unable to lend more help to the Indonesians than merely to refuse to load ships carrying supplies to be used against them. I have sent several telegrams to Indonesian leaders, but since I have received no replies, I am not certain whether the telegrams have ever reached them.



Q: What did you discuss with General Sir Claude Auchinleck?

JN: We discussed Indianisation of the army in which the Commander-in-Chief is interested. I am also interested in it but in a different sense.

## 26. Conditions in I.N.A. Prison Camps<sup>1</sup>

In the stress of elections and an ever-changing situation bringing new excitements in its train, some of us are apt to overlook the continuing tragedy of so many of our comrades being kept in prison. It is not prison that we protest against, for prison to our people is a common enough occurrence today. It is the ill-treatment accorded to "C" class prisoners that hurts us and is a challenge to us all.<sup>2</sup>

In the United Provinces especially, the prison administration has been shown up even by court decisions to be callous and inhuman. We continue to receive reports, necessarily fragmentary, about the ill-treatment. Sometimes there are hunger strikes to protest against this. When there is so much talk of a new order in India this persistence in treating political prisoners so badly is significant and shocking.

Recently reports of extraordinary occurrences in I.N.A. prison camps culminating in the suicide of two I.N.A. officers have reached us.<sup>3</sup> We have avoided giving full publicity to them without inquiry and reference to the Government, but it is clear that this kind of thing cannot be easily tolerated. It is necessary that the Government should give full facilities for interviewing I.N.A. prisoners in the various camps, so that the real facts may be known.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 4 December 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 December 1945.
2. Political prisoners in all provinces, particularly in the U.P., were being treated brutally and more harshly than ordinary convicts. They were beaten up on minor pretexts, their food was of poor quality, their work was heavy and they were denied reading and writing facilities. The detenus in Agra, Varanasi, Bareilly, Lucknow, Fatehgarh and Farrukhabad jails were on hunger strike in protest against the ill-treatment.
3. It was reported that in September 1944, two I.N.A. officers, detained in the Delhi Red Fort, snatched the rifle from a guard and committed suicide because they could not bear the ill-treatment.

Beyond India, in Burma<sup>4</sup> and especially in Malaya,<sup>5</sup> the plight of Indians connected with the Indian Independence League is very bad and hundreds of them are apparently in prison or detention.

Our representatives have so far not been allowed to go there and the Overseas Department of the Government of India has observed a discreet silence.<sup>6</sup> The Ceylonese Government took immediate steps to protect its nationals in Malaya and it was stated in the State Council of Ceylon that not a single Ceylonese was held in custody in Malaya. Not so our Government. Among those under detention or in prison are prominent Indians like Mr. Raghavan<sup>7</sup> and Mr. Goho<sup>8</sup> and Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan.

Apart from this political aspect, the economic condition of the people in Malaya is bad. There is an urgent need for food, clothing and medicine. If the Government is incapable of taking effective action to protect our people in Burma and Malaya, they must at least allow our representatives to go there immediately to give all possible help.

4. A report of 3 December 1945 from Rangoon stated that there were about 1200 I.N.A. men in the Rangoon jail, among whom were 90 civilians belonging to the Indian Independence League.
5. Thousands of Indians were prosecuted in Malaya for their activities in the Indian Independence League and for alleged collaboration during the Japanese occupation. Many Indians were living on starvation diet and thousands of women were dressed in sackcloth. Besides scarcity of goods and high prices, most of the people had no means of buying anything, as their money lost value when the Japanese currency ceased to be the legal tender.
6. A Congress medical mission under Dr. B. C. Roy was awaiting Government permission to visit Malaya. The Government later refused permission on the ground that it was itself sending enough medical aid to Malaya.
7. N. Raghavan (1900-1978); Revenue Minister in the Provisional Government of Free India during the war; President, Central Indian Association of Malaya; after independence served as ambassador in several countries.
8. S.C. Goho, president of the Indian Association of Singapore, was in jail on a charge of collaboration with the Japanese.

## 27. The Need for Unity and Discipline<sup>1</sup>

I am a little ashamed that I have taken such a long time since my release from prison to come to Bengal. The cry of Bengal reached us

1. Speech inaugurating the I.N.A. Week at Calcutta, 9 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10 December 1945.



in Ahmadnagar Fort, and Bengal was ever present in our mind there and since our release. The day I came out of prison I thought of Bengal and wanted to come here, but events had been too powerful for me and had kept me away. At that time I thought of all the occurrences in 1942 and onwards and also of the great famine. And now recently we have had another and a very unfortunate happening in Calcutta city.<sup>2</sup>

The terrible suffering of Bengal has pained us. It has been a tragedy for this province. But there has also been recently a feeling of elation at the spirit of the people, specially of the young, who endured it. Calcutta recently afforded a very remarkable spectacle of revolutionary significance. It grieves me that some young men lost their lives. But I cannot forget their fervour and courage at the time of the crisis. It is during these times of crises that people are judged. It may be said that the people of Calcutta rose to the occasion during this crisis.

Wrong acts might have been committed in 1942 or afterwards or in recent days, but in judging a mighty event, one must look at the spirit and courage of the people and the motive behind it. No doubt, today there is a new life in Bengal and in India. There is an amazing enthusiasm among the youth. This shows that we are a living and vibrant nation intent on freedom and resolved to achieve it whatever be the cost. This shows also that we are bound to win it.

But mere enthusiasm is not enough. Even self-sacrifices are not enough. We must have discipline and organised effort at the right time. Otherwise, our enthusiasm will be frittered away in small individual acts. Therefore, our young men must learn this great lesson of curbing and directing their enthusiasm in right channels and at the right time.

Today India faces a critical period. Vital decisions will be taken in a year or two. These decisions will depend ultimately on our unity and discipline and strength. Sporadic violence will not pay. It will fritter away our energies. If we have to adopt violence as the method of our fight it is for the nation to do it deliberately and not casually. It should not be forgotten that there are new and mighty weapons of violence in the possession of the Government. When India becomes free it will have to decide the question of violence or nonviolence for itself. But today we have to adopt organised and peaceful methods which the Congress has so far followed, and which brought much success and strength to us.

2. On 21 November 1945, a procession of 500 students demonstrated peacefully in Calcutta in observance of the I.N.A. Day. When the procession entered a prohibited area, it clashed with the police, and a student was killed. The consequent rioting in Calcutta for two days resulted in 37 deaths with 200 injured.

The Indian National Army fought bravely for the freedom of India and large numbers of them died in that struggle. We honour them for their fight for freedom and for their sacrifices. Yet the main lesson they teach us is not only the love for the country and of freedom, but discipline and organisation and the unity they forged among themselves. The communal problem that troubles us so much was solved by them in their ranks. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs lived together as Indians, and struggled unitedly for the common cause. We honour them for this specially, and we honour their great leader, Subhas Chandra Bose. Even when we differed from him in the past we respected him as a great fighter for India's freedom. In recent years he showed himself a great organiser and, above all, a welder of different communities of India into a single body. The facts that have come out in the recent trial establish that he consistently resisted the Japanese encroachment on the freedom of the Provisional Government, which he had set up, and on the Indian National Army.<sup>3</sup> This Government and this army were no puppets of the Japanese, but were moved by the passion for freedom. Repeatedly they declared that they would not serve Japanese imperialism. The situation then was difficult and required a careful handling. Subhas Bose and his colleagues proved themselves as able leaders in those moments of great crisis and difficulty. Therefore we have to learn from the Indian National Army how to build up our unity and how to organise and discipline ourselves.

In the days ahead we shall have many crises to face. If we have unity and discipline and a common objective we can surely overcome them.

I have much to say to the people of Bengal, for much has happened in these three and a half years since I was here last. I hope to avail myself of this opportunity to meet personally our younger and vital groups on whom the burden of tomorrow will fall. Yesterday is a past event though we cannot forget it. Today consumes our energies, but it is ultimately the tomorrow that we must think about and prepare ourselves, for it is the tomorrow which has a promise of freedom.

3. During the I.N.A. trial a Japanese witness testified that Subhas Bose had resented Japanese hesitation in providing him with effective assistance and the Japanese attempts to impose restrictions on the sovereignty of the Andamans. He secured the stationing of a Japanese diplomatic mission in Rangoon to deal officially with the Provisional Government of Free India.



## 28. On the Release of the I.N.A. Officers<sup>1</sup>

I am happy to learn of the release of the three I.N.A. officers whose trial had moved India very deeply. In the circumstances, this was the only thing to do and I am glad the Commander-in-Chief has done it.<sup>2</sup> The fact of their being expelled from the army has no significance, as they themselves had left that army long ago. I trust that this policy will be pursued in the cases of other I.N.A. officers and men also.<sup>3</sup> They should be released. The senior counsel, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, conducted the trial with his usual ability and eloquence. He deserves congratulations. The people of India were united as never before and, therefore, it is their triumph also. We welcome back our comrades, Shah Nawaz, Dhillon and Sehgal and trust that their patriotism, courage and ability, which had faced severe tests, will be diverted to the work of India's emancipation.

1. Interview to the press, Larkana, 5 January 1946. *The Hindu*, 6 January 1946.
2. On 4 January 1946, the Commander-in-Chief remitted the sentences of transportation for life passed by the Court-Martial on Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon and confirmed the sentence of cashiering and forfeiture of arrears of pay and allowances.
3. The I.N.A. prisoners were brought back to India from 1944 and graded in three categories — "white" consisting of those who helped the Allied forces, "grey" those who went over under duress and "black" those who had actively helped the enemy. The "white" were reinstated, the "grey" dismissed and the "black" kept in detention camps before being brought to trial.

## 29. To M.A. Raschid<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 11, 1946

My dear Raschid,

I have just received your letter<sup>2</sup> of the 8th. I understand your position. It is difficult for me to suggest any ways and means for your return to

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had sought Jawaharlal's help to return to Burma where he intended to work for the welfare of Indians.

Burma. As you know I have myself applied for a passport and travel facilities to Burma and Malaya and these have not been forthcoming so far. Probably you will find it easier to go there. Anyway you are more likely to think of a suitable method than I am. If anything strikes me I shall let you know. Try to go as soon as you can and see me before you go.

I am glad you, Dadachanjee and others are thinking of starting a new organisation of Burma Indians, laying stress on cooperation with the Burmese. I am convinced that there is no other way even from the narrowest nationalist viewpoint. It surprises me how short-sighted our business interests are when they demand political and economic safeguards from the British against the Burmese. The British will not and cannot give them, and they are likely to fade away from the picture before long.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**30. To Secretary, External Affairs Department, Govt. of India<sup>1</sup>**

January 12, 1946

Dear Sir,

On November 30th I wrote to the Home Member of the Government of India as well as to the Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces requesting that passport and travel facilities be granted to me for visiting Burma and Malaya as early as possible. Subsequently on December 27, I sent a reminder to both the governments. I understand that this request of mine has been transferred to your department.

I have received many pressing invitations from friends in Burma and Malaya who are in distress and I should like to respond to them and to help them if I can. I have also been directed by the Working Committee of the Congress to visit Burma and Malaya on their behalf

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.



to help in relieving the distress of Indians there. I am aware that the Government of India have made some arrangements for giving help and relief to Indians in Burma and Malaya.<sup>2</sup> These arrangements will no doubt be of assistance to our people. But the problem is a big one and official help should be supplemented through private and non-official agencies. It is with a view to this that the Working Committee directed me to visit these countries and further requested Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy of Calcutta to organise medical missions in this behalf. Doctors, nurses, and the necessary equipment are all ready to proceed immediately and are awaiting Government's permission. I shall be grateful to you if you will kindly expedite this matter and inform me as soon as possible of your decision.

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Government of India had provided Rs. 1 lakh for relief of Indians in Malaya.

**31. To Secretary, Home Department, Government of India<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
January 12, 1946

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 31st December 1945. I am surprised that my previous letter dated November 30th addressed to the Home Member did not reach the Home Department. I now enclose a copy of that letter. You will notice that I desire to have travelling facilities for visiting Burma and Malaya as early as possible. For this purpose I want my passport renewed and such permits and priorities as may be necessary to travel by air to Burma and Malaya. Will you be good enough to expedite this matter and to let me have the decision of the Government of India as early as possible?

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

### 32. To the Chief Secretary, U.P. Government<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 12, 1946

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of January 4th. This matter<sup>2</sup> has been pending now for six weeks and I would request an early decision. In any event my old passport, renewed for a further period, should be sent to me.

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Home Department (police), F. No. 2192/1945, U.P. Government.
2. Application for the renewal of the passport.

### 33. The Example of Subhas Bose<sup>1</sup>

Netaji Subhas has set an example of courage and passionate devotion to the cause of Indian freedom, which will live long in India's history. Equally important is the way in which he has demonstrated how to weld the different communities in a common unity.

1. Message sent for Subhas Bose's birthday meeting held in Bombay. From *The Hindu*, 17 January 1946.

### 34. The Triumph of the Indian People<sup>1</sup>

It is right that the record of the trial by General Court Martial of the three officers of the Indian National Army should be published in book

1. 17 January 1946. Foreword to *Two Historic Trials in Red Fort*, by Moti Ram.



form and made easily accessible to the public. No trial in India either by Court Martial or in the civil courts has attracted so much public attention or has dealt with issues of such fundamental national importance. The legal issues were important enough, involving as they did questions of that rather vague and flexible body of doctrine known as international law. But behind the law there was something deeper and more vital, something that stirred the subconscious depths of the Indian mind. Those three officers and the Indian National Army became symbols of India fighting for her independence. All minor issues faded away, even the personalities of the three men being tried for an offence involving a death sentence became blurred in that larger picture of India. The trial dramatised and gave visible form to the old contest: England *versus* India. It became in reality not merely a question of law or of forensic eloquence and ability—though there was plenty of ability and eloquence—but rather a trial of strength between the will of the Indian people and the will of those who hold power in India. And it was that will of the Indian people that triumphed in the end. Therein lies significance, therein lies the promise of the future. Able lawyers conducted the case on either side, and the defence was fortunate in having some of the best legal talents in India: the Judges of the Court Martial played a worthy part and the Judge Advocate delivered a notable summing-up. And, finally, the Commander-in-Chief put the final touches to a historic episode by a decision which showed vision and true judgment. But the triumph was that of the Indian people as a whole, civil and military, who had pronounced judgment already and their verdict was too powerful to be ignored.

Lawyers will study and analyse the many aspects of this trial. Another precedent will burden their shelves. But lovers of freedom everywhere will rejoice that even the law, strait-laced as it is by convention and precedent, was compelled to recognise the right of a people to fight for their freedom.

The story behind this trial was strange enough. A few months ago very few persons in India knew anything about it. Gradually, it unfolded itself as the trial proceeded and it gripped the public imagination. No more suitable venue for it than the Red Fort of Delhi could have been found. Every stone in that historic setting tells a story and revives a memory of long ago. Ghosts of the past, ghosts of the Moghuls, of Shah Jahan, of Bahadur Shah, proud cavaliers pass by on prancing horses, processions wend their way. You hear the tramp of armed men, and the tinkling of silver bells on women's feet. Ambassadors came from far countries to pay court to the splendid court of the Moghul emperors; viceroys and governors and the great Amirs came with their

retenués to report to their sovereign. There was a hum of life and activity, for this was the hub of a vast and rich empire.

Eighty-eight years ago another trial was held in this Red Fort of Delhi, the trial of the last of a great line. That trial put a final end to a chapter of India's history. Was this second trial, held in the final weeks of 1945, to mark the end of another chapter? Surely, it is a presage of that end, and those who watched it from day-to-day, or those who will read about it in the printed page will sense how that end draws near and the page is being turned for us to begin the new chapter. But it is not necessary to go to the trial for this. The very air of India is full of that change and turning over into something bright and new, where history can be written by us in a different fashion.

### 35. The Achievements of Subhas Bose<sup>1</sup>

I am gratified that this meeting is being held at a place which links the two cities of Old Delhi and New Delhi. There is a conflict between old and new ideas everywhere in the world. I congratulate Mr. Prem Sehgal for his resolve to dedicate his life for the cause of India's freedom. The I.N.A. has become a legend and the slogan of *Jai Hind* has spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. The three officers of the I.N.A. who were accused in the first trial are merely the symbol of India's struggle for freedom. The release of the three officers is not so much due to the able advocacy of the lawyers who appeared on their behalf, but the result of the force of public opinion. In my opinion it is a good sign.

Some people ask me why I am now praising Subhas Bose when I had opposed him while he was in India. I want to give a frank reply to this question. Subhas Bose and I were co-workers in the struggle for freedom for 25 years. He was younger to me by two or four or perhaps more years. Our relations with each other were marked by great affection. I used to treat him as my younger brother. It is an open

1. Speech at Subhas Bose's birthday meeting, Delhi, 23 January 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 24 January and *National Herald*, 25 January 1946.



secret that at times there were differences between us on political questions. But I never for a moment doubted that he was a brave soldier in the struggle for freedom.

I do not expect that there would be unanimity on every issue when we have achieved freedom. There will be always differences in the outlook of the people who belong to a healthy race. Such differences are welcome. A people who behave like sheep cannot make any progress. At the same time we should also guard against indiscipline. In the Congress forum we discuss every question and arrive at a decision by following a democratic procedure. There are differences among us on certain aspects of international questions. Even now my approach to these questions is fundamentally the same.

I am not carried away by the public sentiment which found expression in supporting the cause of the I.N.A. men. When the complete picture of the movement came before me I formed my opinion. I do not know even today what I would have myself done at a time of crisis like that. For that reason I cannot judge anybody else. One thing however is clear. No Indian can withhold his praise for his countrymen who fight bravely. The manner in which Netaji faced the crisis inspires admiration. Perhaps I might have done the same thing if I were in his position. But I have always believed, and I still cling to this belief, that it is dangerous to take the help of another country for gaining freedom. Every country in the world today places its own national interests in the forefront. It is futile to expect that any country will help us in our struggle out of an altruistic motive. India's history furnishes several instances of how such help proved disastrous to its integrity and unity. The people whose help we sought established their domination over us.

The story of the I.N.A., as revealed during the trial of the three officers, has shown how Subhas Bose stoutly resisted Japanese attempts at overlordship and maintained an independent status. He never allowed himself to be handled by the Japanese as they pleased.

Another achievement of the I.N.A. is that it was able to forge a complete communal unity and harmony in its ranks. The standard of their fighting is admittedly very high. It is possible they will be acceptable to the future army of free India. It does not mean that the prospects of those already in the Indian army will be affected.

It is the duty of the country to see that all those who served in the I.N.A. get proper work. The country should also make use of some of the 20 to 25 lakhs of Indian soldiers who will soon be demobilised.

The impudence of the Home Member, seen in his reply to a question in the Assembly urging the release of Jayaprakash Narayan, is a challenge

to our self-respect.<sup>2</sup> Nobody has any doubt about the bravery, high-mindedness and patriotism of Jayaprakash Narayan. The Home Member's reply should kindle a fire of resentment in your hearts. The British Government should find it impossible to maintain its domination over this country.

I have heard of Subhas Day celebrations by certain people who call themselves as members of the Congress leftist group. There is no left group in the Congress. If the leftists were there to disrupt the work of the Congress, then the sooner leftism dies the better it will be. All talk of leftism and Pakistan is meaningless until we have driven out the foreign Government from this country.

2. On 23 January 1946, the Home Member said that he had met Jayaprakash in jail a few days before. As he still believed in violence as a political method the Government saw no reason to release him.

### 36. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 29, 1946

My dear Krishna,  
I have sent you separately by air mail a copy of a letter<sup>2</sup> I have addressed to Stafford Cripps.

I have received your letter of the 16th. My own information about A.C. Nambiar is (but this is vague and not definite) that he is going to be taken to London and that some proceedings are going to be started against him. In fact I was told that the matter was rather serious. His name appeared in the course of the I.N.A. trial here and he appears to have functioned as Subhas Bose's deputy in some places in Europe. Exactly what he did I do not know and I find it difficult to believe that a mild and inoffensive person like him could adopt an aggressive role anywhere. You know that he was hunted from place to place by the Nazis. Imprisoned and then driven out from Berlin, he sought refuge in Prague. Driven out again when the Nazis occupied Prague he came to France. Here also the Nazis gave him trouble but what happened afterwards I do not know. I heard he had gone to reside in France then. I should like you to keep on the lookout for any

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. See *ante*, pp. 138-147.



news of him and to help him as far as possible. If any funds are required they will be sent to you.

Thank you for Bee Batlivala's<sup>3</sup> address. I am writing to her directly.

I wonder if you have been associated with K.B. Menon's case which is before the Privy Council.<sup>4</sup> People at this end have a way of getting entangled with the wrong kind of solicitors and counsel. I do not know who the solicitors are. I hope Polak is not in it. The appeal was sent from Madras some time ago and admitted by the Privy Council. I am very much interested in Menon and want to help him to the best of my ability. Indeed I have just transferred money for the appeal and sent it on to the Madras people. K.B. Menon, as you probably know, was associated with me in the Civil Liberties Union and subsequently in the All India States' People's Conference. He is an excellent worker, very quiet and unostentatious, and the mildest of men. I just cannot imagine him guilty of any of the offences charged against him. He was in fact acquitted by the first court but sentenced for ten years on appeal to the high court. He should have an excellent case.

About my money, I am in no hurry for it and you can use it whenever you require it. I only wanted to know how much it was.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

3. Later Mrs. Mansall; belonged to a well-known Parsi family of Bombay; for some time she practised as a barrister in London; she is now settled in England.
4. K.B. Menon, who was acquitted in the trial court, was convicted on 5 January 1945 of criminal conspiracy by the Madras High Court and was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. His appeal to the Privy Council had been admitted.

### 37. To Secretary, External Affairs Department, Govt. of India<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
31.1.1946

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your D.O. No. D 506-G(P)/46.<sup>2</sup>

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal was informed that the Burmese Government could not agree to his visit, while the Military Administration in Malaya had no objection to his visit to that country for relief of distress.

1. I note that the Burma Government have indicated their unwillingness to agree to my visit to Burma at the present juncture.
2. The conditions under which the British Military Administration have permitted my visit to Malaya are not clear to me. They may be interpreted so as to enable my visit to lose its utility and value. It is desirable that there should be no misunderstanding about this matter on either side. The question before me is not what the British authorities in Malaya expect me to do, but what I intend to do myself. Normally I do not take orders or directions from British authorities, civil or military, in India or elsewhere. Nor am I intending to go to Malaya in order to function as a cog in the administrative machinery, as appears to be indicated in your letter. At the same time I have no desire to interfere in any way with the working of the administration or the measures taken by it for relief of distress.
3. My visit would not be political in the sense of being agitational. But inevitably I shall have to discuss with Indians their political conditions, their disabilities and their present difficulties, and how to surmount them. I shall have to help them in organising defence of such persons as are being proceeded against in courts of law and court-martial, as well as those who have been arrested, detained or are in prison. As Indians they will naturally be interested in the present and future of India and I shall have to speak to them about it.
4. The actual relief work to remove distress from lack of food, medicine, clothing and other necessities can hardly be done by me. I can only report about conditions to my committee in India which will be in a position to organise relief if the necessary facilities are afforded to it. Medical relief, as you are aware, has been entrusted to the mission organised on my behalf by Dr. B.C. Roy, which is still awaiting Government's permission.
5. From many reports received by us from Indians in Malaya it is clear that there is acute distress and a sense of fear among them. The material assistance afforded to them is important and it would appear that this is by no means sufficient. To that we want to add to the best of our ability. But even more important is the psychological background and an approach which removes this sense of fear and oppression, and enables the community to stand up on its own feet and help itself. This approach is always difficult for a military administration, however well-intentioned it might be. But for me this would be easy and I believe I could make a difference. The fact that so many of my countrymen desire my visit and urge me to go there is itself a significant indication of what is needed.



6. That psychological approach will be largely nullified if I go to Malaya under constraint and limitations. Indeed I would not like to go in these conditions. It is surprising that nearly six months after the end of the war, there should be so many barriers and difficulties in the way of travel, even for the urgent necessity of giving material and psychological relief.

7. I am prepared to go to Malaya at fairly short notice. I should like to take a secretary with me. My stay there should not exceed ten days if normal facilities for transport are available. If not, then it is a little difficult for me to fix the limit of my stay. I should like to visit Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and perhaps two or three centres. I note that the authorities will be unable to provide me with a car. I shall try to do without it but I would expect that other facilities, such as petrol etc., will be available.

8. I shall be glad if you will kindly let me know if what I have written above is acceptable to the British Military Administration in Malaya, and if so, what approximate date would be feasible for my journey to Malaya.

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 38. To Bhulabhai Desai<sup>1</sup>

Lucknow  
6.2.46

My dear Bhulabhai,  
Nandan met me today and told me that he had seen you in Bombay and that you had expressed your disappointment at my not having written or telephoned to you at the conclusion of the first I.N.A. trial. You were right and I am to blame. Still, as a matter of fact, I was full of admiration for your conduct of the case and especially for your final address. I referred to this at the time in a number of speeches and in a press statement. I was rushing about from place to place and had little time to write. Subsequently, I was unfortunate enough to develop dysentery right in the middle of a tour.

1. Bhulabhai Desai Papers, N.M.M.L.

You will forgive me, I hope. Somehow, I felt later that it would be rather redundant and too late for me to write. But I was and am greatly impressed by your admirable conduct of the case.

Sincerely yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 39. Abandon the Trials<sup>1</sup>

Being on tour in the interior, I could not keep up with news. But I must say that the sentence passed on Capt. Rashid<sup>2</sup> of the I.N.A. seems to be very unjust and wrong. I do not admire or appreciate in the least the stand taken or the statement made by Capt. Rashid in the course of his trial.<sup>3</sup> That was something not in keeping with the dignity of an individual or group or the I.N.A. or the nation. Nor can we have any sympathy with any acts of cruelty indulged in by anyone against officers and soldiers of the Indian army.

I do not know the facts of individual cases and am unable to judge. But it must be borne in mind that the circumstances were very special and extraordinary and normal standards cannot be applied to these cases.

The Commander-in-Chief acted wisely and with far-sighted statesmanship in the first I.N.A. trial. That wisdom and far sight are needed for other cases also. Indeed the right thing to do is to abandon these cases. In Capt. Rashid's case the heavy sentence passed must be revised.

1. Statement to the press, Bahraich, 8 February 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 10 February 1946.
2. Abdul Rashid, formerly a captain in the Punjab Regiment of the Indian Army, was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on a charge of brutality to fellow Indians.
3. On 22 January 1946, he stated that he had joined the Indian National Army to safeguard the interests of his community against the non-Muslims, "who were to invade India with the Japanese and establish a Ram raj."



**40. To Vallabhbhai Patel'**

Allahabad  
15 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

In Gorakhpur I found 100 Gurkhas who had served in the I.N.A. and had been discharged. They are a special problem and have to be dealt with specially for various reasons. Partly because the Gurkhas stood apart in the past and they require some encouragement. Partly, on the other hand, because they are generally illiterate and the only work they can do is watch and ward or something of that type. I imagine that room could be found for them in Bombay for this kind of work. We could get some of them engaged here but the salaries are low. Could you kindly look into this matter or ask somebody to look into it. A direct communication on the subject might be sent to:

Thakur Singhasan Singh

C/o The District Congress Committee

Gorakhpur

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 3, p. 203.

## STATES PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT





**1. To Jainarain Vyas<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad

26-6-1945

My dear Jainarainji,

Your letter and telegram. I have already sent a telegram in reply. I am definitely of opinion that a meeting of the States People's Standing Committee should not be held at this stage. We cannot decide anything though, of course, if we meet, there will be much to talk about — past occurrences etc. As you say it would be unwise to raise the States question in the Simla talks. That would only lead to confusion and unfortunate consequences. So I suggest that we should await developments.

My programme is so uncertain that I am reluctant to fix any engagement which might have to be given up. I may have to go to Simla suddenly. But the main thing is that we cannot profitably discuss anything till the situation is clearer. I hope you will make this position clear to our friends who have asked for a meeting of the Standing Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**2. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>**

Sind Valley, Kashmir

July 31, 1945

My dear Krishna,

I wrote to you a few days ago from an out-of-the-way place in the Kashmir mountains. I hope the letter, which was sent by air mail, reached you. I would have preferred sending an air letter but I could not get suitable forms. Our trekking expedition has ended and tomorrow we go to Srinagar to be accorded a formal reception there — a river procession etc. Both Indira and I have enjoyed this twelve-day trip and pro-

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.



fited by it. I feel physically fitter and mentally much refreshed. But owing to exposure to alternation of cold and the hot sun my skin in many places threatens to peel off.

I shall be a week in Srinagar where inevitably there are many engagements. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, the President of the Kashmir National Conference, is a remarkable man in his own way and he has proved himself to be an effective mass leader. Starting 15 years ago more or less as a communal leader he veered round quickly and changed his Kashmir Muslim Conference into the Kashmir National Conference. You must remember that Kashmir proper (apart from Jammu, Ladakh etc.) has a 95% Muslim population. Sheikh Abdullah has not formally allied himself to the Indian National Congress but generally he follows the Congress lead. He has been connected also with the All India States People's Conference of which I am president. In 1942 Kashmir, under Sheikh Abdullah's leadership, reacted in much the same way as the rest of India. The Muslim League, representing the out-and-out communally-minded Muslims, opposes him; but it is very weak in Kashmir. It just feebly exists in two or three towns and has no influence whatsoever in the rural areas. Sheikh Abdullah is amazingly popular among the masses who call him the *Sher-e-Kashmir* — the Lion of Kashmir — and many songs have been written and are sung about him. Going through these inner valleys I have been surprised to find how deep and far-reaching is his influence. These terribly poor, dirty and unkempt, half-clad people, living in a land which is amazingly rich, look up to him as their deliverer. I have been greatly moved by the demonstrations of welcome and affection for him and for me from these simple folks, often half-nomads moving up and down the valleys with the changing seasons. They take me to their heart as a Kashmiri, one of themselves, though I live far away and the fact that I am a Kashmiri Brahmin, welcomed alike by Muslims or Hindus, helps to make people feel that there is no communal question in Kashmir. Of course there is a bit of that question here — reversed compared to India as a whole. The Kashmiri Pundits here form a small minority — 5% or so and chiefly belonging to the middle classes — lower and middle — with few contacts with the masses. Any mass movement therefore frightens them. They look to the state services which in the past they largely monopolised, together with Punjabis, and the Muslims were very backward in education etc. Now there is an inevitable tendency for Muslims to demand their share and more of these services. So the question, which is really an economic and class one, assumes sometimes a communal aspect. Still many bright young men among the Kashmiri Pundits have joined Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference and even others are by

no means hostile to him. My visit to Kashmir, therefore, serves a purpose also — apart from health reasons — for it helps the Kashmiri Pundits to come out of their middle class shells and join the wider movement. They are amazingly intelligent and wherever they have gone in other parts of India they have made their mark.

You will be interested to know the kind of songs Kashmiri women sang to welcome us as we passed through their villages — One of them ran thus (in Kashmiri of course):

You are the golden earring in our ears.  
Where are you going far away from us?  
The way is long and perilous,  
Come back, come back to us soon.

Kashmir and Kashmir politics have a certain importance in Indian affairs. Although Jinnah keeps the States out of his speeches and plans, it is obvious that if there is to be Pakistan or anything like it, Kashmir must be a part of it just as the N.W.F. Province must belong to it. The fact that both the N.W.F.P. and Kashmir (both with overwhelming Muslim populations) are opposed to Pakistan has thus considerable significance.

Jinnah has never defined Pakistan and refuses to do so. It is pretty clear now that he has overshot his mark and Pakistan is further off than ever. Pakistan, when analysed, leads to two principal conclusions: (1) It is inconceivable that Pakistan can be imposed on the southern districts of the Punjab (which are predominantly Hindu and Sikh) or on the western districts of Bengal (which are predominantly Hindu). Thus if ever Pakistan comes into existence it must lead to the partition of Punjab and Bengal, the richer and more developed districts of both being cut off from Pakistan and joining Hindustan. (2) Both in the Punjab and Bengal there is a strong feeling, among Hindus and Muslims alike, against partition of the province. Nowhere in India is there such a strong culturally united area as Bengal. To a somewhat lesser extent but still quite sufficiently this applies to the Punjab also. So there is the riddle: the Pakistanis, if they are keen enough and strong enough, can only have Pakistan after the division of Bengal and the Punjab, and this they do not want because they get economically backward areas which will remain backward, and also because of the strong sentiment among Punjabis and Bengalis (even those who are in favour of Pakistan) against a division of their provinces. This is the rub and because of this Jinnah refuses to define what he wants.

Pakistan would probably have been a much feebler affair today but for the encouragement given to it by British officialdom and some diehards



in Britain. But the final impetus was given to it by the Cripps proposals. Cripps has somehow got it into his head that something of this sort is inevitable or at any rate must be acknowledged and put to vote. The Communist Party of India has been doing raging and tearing propaganda in favour of Pakistan — not just the right of self-determination but a complete surrender to Jinnah's unspecified claims. I think they have acted very foolishly indeed. Their leading men are not first rate in any sense and P.C. Joshi, their No. 1, is an earnest, hardworking and likable person but certainly not up to the mark intellectually or from the point of view of any larger vision. Dange, I think, is the ablest among them but I doubt if he has much influence in the upper ranks of the Indian Communist Party. At present there is terrible prejudice among Congressmen and others against the Communist Party in India but it is important to remember that this prejudice has nothing to do with communism or socialism or Russia. Russia is admired and liked generally and a vague sentiment in favour of socialism is very widely held. The prejudice is against the Indian political policy of the Communist Party here — what they did in August 1942 and subsequently and especially their pro-Pakistan and pro-Jinnah policy. It is a pity that this barrier has been erected and it will take time for it to disappear or to be lowered, especially as the Communist Party here is still continuing its old policy more or less. The fact of the barrier must be recognised.

M.N. Roy and his satellites of course do not count at all in any real sense of the word. Such local influence as they possessed in a very few places was due to the large funds placed at their disposal by Government and because they had a clear field to work during these 3 years. They are thoroughly discredited and can hardly appear in public. When funds dry up they will almost totally disappear from public life. I notice, however, that their agents tried to put up a brave show in London and elsewhere and won over Citrine and some others. Dange did a useful job in exposing them.

I began this letter with the intention of writing to you about your spinning wheel scheme but I have drifted to other subjects. First of all I must repeat that I have thus far received only your air letters dated 8th July and 12th July (two of the latter) and not the earlier one you mention. Also I have not received any plans or specifications of the proposed spinning wheel. I am sending today a copy of your letter about the wheel to Gandhiji and requesting him to communicate direct with you in order to save time. I do not know what his reaction will be to your proposal. Probably he will require further particulars. Anyway he will welcome the attempt to evolve a simple and efficient wheel.

It seems obvious to me that however rapid the pace of industrialisation (by the big machine) in India a vast field will remain for small-scale and cottage industries both of the whole-time and auxiliary variety. The supposed conflict between the big machine and the small or cottage machine is thus largely imaginary provided there is an attempt to fit them into each other in a system of planning. Of course there is a certain conflict in the two philosophies or views of life. In practice however, as I found in the National Planning Committee, the conflict can be reduced to very small proportions, especially if it is agreed that large-scale industry should be socialised or state-owned.

The answers to your queries will, I hope, be supplied by someone on Gandhiji's staff conversant with such affairs. From my very limited layman's knowledge I might, however, inform you that most village and cottage spinning is done between 15 and 20 counts. There has been a progressive tendency to spin finer counts. In special areas, where good long staple cotton is available, counts upto 50 and above are produced. When I spin I usually produce counts 25 to 30. At my fastest, and when I am in the right mood, I have spun 400 yards of 30 counts yarn an hour. I have spun upto 43 counts. My usual speed is 350 yards of 27 counts yarn an hour. My yarn is good and strong. Experts spin much faster.

I am sleepy now after a long day's trek — our last day of this trip.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

### 3. The Labour Victory in Britain<sup>1</sup>

The Labour victory in the British general election is pleasing, because it is symptomatic of a great social and progressive change in British politics, which will inevitably affect both domestic and international affairs.

1. Interview to the press, Srinagar, 2 August 1945. From *The Hindu*, 5 August 1945.



As such I welcome it. So far as India is concerned, it is too early to form an opinion about the effect of such a change. If, as is said,<sup>2</sup> the Labour policy is much the same as the previous policy, then obviously India is not much affected. We shall have to wait and see if this is so. In any event, the fact of a progressive upsurge in Britain is undeniable, and must be welcomed by all progressive opinion in the world.

Since I have come to Kashmir, I have been trekking in the mountains. I have greatly enjoyed this and have profited by it. I have to stay in Srinagar to fulfil several engagements during this week. I have also to visit the Congress President at Gulmarg and I shall make up my final programme after that. Probably I shall rest for a few days at Pahalgam with my daughter who is returning from Kashmir.

2. Amery declared soon after his defeat at the elections that the coming to office of the Labour Party would not make the slightest difference to the tone and temper of British rule in India. Ernest Bevin, the new Foreign Secretary, said that British foreign policy would continue to be in line with that of the Coalition Government.

#### 4. The Kashmir National Conference<sup>1</sup>

For many years past I have been interested in the Kashmir National Conference. On many occasions I have had the privilege of meeting the president and the leader of this conference, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, and of discussing its affairs with him. In my wanderings in Kashmir, specially in the remoter higher valleys, I have seen its influence among the people and the faith and affection they bear to it. But this is the first time that I have had the honour of attending the annual session of this conference and addressing it. I welcome this privilege, a privilege of addressing my brother and sister Kashmiris, people of the same blood and kith and kin.

1. Speech at the annual session of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, Sopore, 4 August 1945. A text of the speech in Jawaharlal's handwriting in the J.N. Papers is printed. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

I have been attracted to this conference for various reasons, among them being the fact that it is a mass organisation, reaching down to and affecting the lives of the common people. Also because it is not a sectarian or communal organisation which shuts its doors to people of other religions or sects. Its doors are open to all Kashmiris who accept its objectives and its basic programme. I am also attracted to the objectives it holds out to the people of Kashmir—the goal of political freedom and of economic emancipation, so that the people should determine their own destiny and get rid of the curse of poverty.

A mass organisation has a certain reality about it because it tends to express the urges and wishes of the masses, and even if those urges happen to be wrong, that reality remains and cannot be ignored. If they go wrong, they will learn through bitter experience and turn to the right path. But a narrow organisation, confined to a small group or a class, has no such reality and tends to move in a confined sphere. It loses sight of the larger and more fundamental problems and gets entangled in the meshes of petty questions which have no vital importance.

In politics, as in life itself, it is of the greatest importance that we should realise what comes first and what comes afterwards. First things must be considered first or else we lose ourselves in secondary matters, forgetting the primary problems. People may agree about a number of matters, and yet it makes all the difference in the world as to what they put first and what second. Is truth our first objective or is it just a secondary affair? Is freedom our first objective or is it dependent on some condition or pre-requisite? Sectarian organisations must inevitably lay greater emphasis on their sectarian claims than on any more important objective. Hence they are narrow and limited, and though they may occasionally give expression to some aspects of the truth, or may talk of freedom, yet they miss the essence of the truth and have no real incentive for freedom. Further, they can never think in terms of the masses or of the fundamental economic problems of the day because they are too much entangled in their own sectarian claims.

Because the Kashmir National Conference has avoided these errors and pitfalls, it has been a national conference as opposed to a communal organisation, and has kept its doors wide open to all because it has looked to the masses and sought to relieve them of their many burdens and drawn its strength from them because it has aimed high. I have looked upon its growth with pleasure and hope. Inevitably it consists of a great majority of Muslim representatives because Muslims form the largest population in Kashmir. But the Hindus and the Sikhs and other Kashmiris have a place in it and I am glad to say that many of them have joined it, and function through it. I would urge upon them that



it is their duty to strengthen this mass organisation not only for wider nationalistic reasons but also for the good of their own community. It is patent that no small minority can have any place in the future scheme of things unless it lines up with the majority. At present some minorities look to a third party for their sustenance and protection. That is a sure way of doing disservice to their own community, for the third party, whatever it is, cannot long remain and ultimately the minority will have to face the majority and come to terms with it. This does not mean that the minority should surrender its legitimate rights to the majority. Anything that is right should never be surrendered and any individual or group who surrenders the right for fear of consequences does injury to itself and is not honoured by others. But while in fundamental matters of principle there can or should be no surrender, in regard to other and special claims there should be no insistence. No community gains strength by petty squabbles or by being spoon-fed. Strength comes not from outside protection or petty demands, but from self-reliance. All that a minority, and especially the highly enlightened minority of Kashmir, should demand are full citizenship rights and free field and full opportunity for progress in common with others. To ask for special rights and protection, limits the field of opportunity and growth and results in the minority putting itself in a cage of its own making. I trust, therefore, that Kashmiri Pundits and Sikhs and others will throw their full weight on the side of the National Conference.

We live in a dynamic and changing world which is changing from day to day at a remarkable speed. We have, therefore, to keep wide awake and not allow old practices and modes of thought to imprison us. Our political policies may vary from day to day but our fundamental objectives and methods must remain. We must remember always that a noble objective requires noble means. If we play an opportunist game, seeking some advantage in the present without regard to the future, then we sell that future for a very doubtful present. A great task nobly undertaken is lowered and discredited because the means to be adopted is low. We must, therefore, stick to our objective through noble means, even though this may mean some disadvantage in the present.

Kashmir is a beautiful land and those who live here are fortunate. But real good fortune will only come on the day freedom comes to the people. That freedom cannot be an isolated affair for Kashmir; it depends wholly on the freedom of the whole of India. Freedom, it has been said, is indivisible. And so the problems of Kashmir as well as the freedom of Kashmir must be viewed in this perspective as integral parts of the vaster Indian problem.

I wish good fortune and success to the efforts of this conference. I

trust that it will become more and more representative of all groups in Kashmir and I hope that under the wise and far-seeing leadership of the *Sher-e-Kashmir*, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, it will succeed in achieving its objective.

## 5. The Pundits of Kashmir<sup>1</sup>

Kashmiri Pundits must not be led by narrow sectional interests. In this revolutionary period you must take a long range view and not develop an isolationist attitude. You must know that you are a small minority of five per cent in Kashmir and that the remaining 95 per cent are Muslims. You will be wise and far-sighted if you maintain good relations with the Muslims who form the bulk of the population in this land. Take a very realistic view of the situation, otherwise you will be swept off the board.

I know well Sheikh Abdullah and his lieutenants and workers of the Kashmir National Conference. I am happy to observe that the foundation<sup>2</sup> of the conference is right, though I may not agree with all its decisions. The doors of the National Conference are open to all. Even if there are no Hindus in it, its character will remain national because it is a mass organisation. I am, however, glad that there are Hindus and Sikhs in the National Conference. I advise others to join it in much larger numbers and thereby influence its decisions. They must not remain passive spectators and critics. It is obvious, and even a child should know, that the Maharaja and the British will always keep you slaves if you do not line up with the masses in the land. You should not think in terms of temporary advantages or Government jobs. You should not rely on official patronage or recommendation.

1. Address to Kashmiri Pundits, Srinagar, 7 August 1945. From *The Hindu*, 10 August 1945.
2. Over 77 per cent of the State's population was Muslim — 61.5 per cent in Jammu and 95 per cent in the Kashmir province. The Kashmir National Conference, which was formed in 1932, brought the Muslims and Hindus in a common movement for independence.



## 6. The Ninth of August<sup>1</sup>

We are proud of the August 1942 events. August has become a symbol of India's urge for freedom. Although the leaders were arrested on 9 August, the people took up the challenge of the British Government and gave a valiant answer. In anger and indignation at the arrest of their leaders, they bravely faced the bombing, machine-gun firing and lathis. Their passionate craving for freedom found expression in brave and heroic deeds.

People should judge the August events in the right perspective of history. I am not afraid of using the word "rebellion" for the August movement. There had never been a greater revolt in India since 1857. There were good and bad aspects in that movement with which I may not agree, but I cannot withhold my praise for those who, guided by the urge for freedom, made great sacrifices. If our people had tamely submitted to the British Government, the country would have lost its honour. We are the stronger for what has happened during the past three years.

According to the Government's statement some one thousand people were killed in firing on 565 occasions. According to the people's estimate the number of killed is placed at ten, twenty or fifty times as much, but the exact numbers of the dead and the wounded are not known. But for their blood India would have been a carcass.

The Quit India Resolution was merely a pretext for the Government to arrest Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee. Warrants for our arrest had been prepared on 4 August, four days before the resolution was actually passed. When we were in jail it was stated time and again on behalf of the Government that if the August Resolution was withdrawn the position would be reconsidered. Still the resolution could not be withdrawn. It will not be withdrawn neither today nor tomorrow nor the day after.

Today, the Ninth August, our minds should not have thoughts of retaliation against those who are guilty of tyrannical acts. We should dedicate our lives to that noble cause for which our brave men and women laid down their lives. We are proud of those martyrs, known and unknown.

1. Speech at Srinagar, 9 August 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 August 1945.

## 7. The Vulgarly of Communal Demonstration<sup>1</sup>

I am leaving Srinagar today after eight strenuous days. I have had the privilege of meeting many old friends and making new ones, of coming into contact with many groups and with friendly crowds. Everywhere I have been overwhelmed with kindness. The memory of this will endure for long. This lovely city, superbly situated in the valley of beauty, with immemorial mountains around it, speaks always to my heart and arouses thoughts of long connections.

The combination of natural beauty and human friendship and of exceeding courtesy and mass enthusiasm is a potent attraction to the mind and heart. As I have been affected I cannot express my gratitude sufficiently to the people of Kashmir who have caused these deeply moving experiences. May it be well with them now and in future and may they scale rapidly the mountains to reach the land of freedom and progress.

I have tried to avoid, as far as I could, incursions into the domestic politics of Kashmir. But I must express my sorrow at the regrettable incident which occurred on 1 August during the river procession.<sup>2</sup> That procession was a triumphant success and a hundred thousand and more Kashmiris showered their love and affection on the favoured guests. But a small number of persons demonstrated against them. For my part, I have no objection to a hostile demonstration, especially when it is lost in an overwhelming friendly welcome from the masses of people. But what pained me most was the utter vulgarity and the absolute obscenity of the people's behaviour.

I was also surprised to notice that this and the violence that accompanied it had apparently been tolerated by the police authorities. I imagine that it would have been easy enough to prevent or control it by taking effective steps.

What has pained me ever more has been the commendation of this unseemly behaviour by some persons in a language which sinks to the lowest level of vulgarity and is an open invitation to extreme forms of violence and to a repetition of what occurred. Politics have their ups

1. Statement to the press, Srinagar, 9 August 1945. From *The Tribune*, 11 August 1945.
2. On 1 August 1945, adherents of the Muslim Conference, a branch of the Muslim League in Kashmir, tried to break up the river procession in Srinagar, taken out in honour of Jawaharlal and Maulana Azad. The police quietly looked on. One member of the National Conference who was injured later died.



and downs and sometimes they are unsavoury. But there is a limit to vulgarity and meanness. This limit has been passed by a few people at least in Kashmir. I trust, however, that the vast majority of people will not allow this degradation to affect their own standards of action and behaviour.

## 8. To Khan Sahib<sup>1</sup>

Gulmarg  
August 10, 1945

My dear Khan,

My stay in Kashmir has been somewhat more prolonged than I had intended. Partly this is due to the Maulana's wishes. I have had to change my programme repeatedly. I did not write to you before I knew for certain what my programme was. In answer to a letter from Mehar Chand I wrote to him my provisional programme and requested him to inform you of it. This provisional programme has now been more or less confirmed, subject always to any emergency arising. It is as follows:

I leave Srinagar on the 21st morning reaching Murree about 4 p.m. I spend that night at Murree and on the forenoon of the 22nd I leave by car for Dungargali and Nathiagali, reaching either place about noon. I propose to stay there the rest of that day as well as the whole of next day and night. Whether I should spend more time at Dungargali or at Nathiagali, and where I should spend the two nights, it is for you to decide. I understand the two places are quite near to each other. My main purpose of going there is to meet you and so it is for you to decide and fix up how I should divide my time there.

I am sorry I cannot spend more time in the Frontier Province at this stage. I have already kept away far too long from my own province and an urgent work calls me. Besides, the month of *Ramzan* is not a suitable month for visiting the Frontier. If possible I shall come again later. But in these changed times no one can look too far ahead. For the present, therefore, my visit to the Frontier will be confined to Dungargali and Nathiagali and to meeting you and such other friends as are available there. I do not want to go to Peshawar and, though I might have to pass Abbottabad on the way, I do not consider this a visit to Abbottabad.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I propose to leave Nathiagali on the 24th morning for Rawalpindi. If it is possible, I should like to visit Taxila on the way. But in any event I want to reach Rawalpindi by 5 p.m. or a little later on the 24th. I leave the same night for Lahore.

I hope you will be free to have a long talk with me. It seems pretty certain that new developments will take place in the political situation before long, and possibly within the next fortnight or so. We have to be prepared for them and I wish to discuss these possibilities with you.

I hope Mary<sup>2</sup> is well. I have had occasion to meet Badshah Khan two or three times in Srinagar. I understand he is going back today or tomorrow.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

2. Mrs. Khan Sahib.

## 9. High Ideals and an Honest Path<sup>1</sup>

Mere enthusiasm is of little avail. One must toil hard, understand his job and thus march on the path of progress. In political, social and economic affairs the interests of lakhs of people are involved. These are complicated matters and enthusiasm alone will not help in solving the problems confronting our country.

If you would concentrate on the big and the basic questions, your outlook also will widen individually and collectively. If you become involved in petty questions and quarrels, you lose both your present and your future. Be on your guard against opportunism as it may do harm to your cause. If small groups in an organisation take care of their group interests only, it brings about their disintegration. It is essential for every organisation like yours to keep high its ideals and choose the right and the honest path for achieving its purpose. As you will do, so shall your followers. Therefore, move forward in the honourable way with your heads erect.

1. Address to the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference workers, Srinagar, 19 August 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 August 1945.



Nobody can say what will happen and when that will happen. The struggle for our country's freedom will continue unabated till we reach our goal. In the Simla Conference an interim arrangement to solve the Indian deadlock was sought. That phase is over. The question of our country's freedom is before us demanding permanent solution. Great political wisdom is required to find out the solution.

The Government of India should clarify matters regarding the personnel of the Indian National Army in Burma. These people were misguided people but their patriotism cannot be doubted.

#### 10. Telegram to Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah<sup>1</sup>

On leaving Kashmir after a month of vivid experiences in the mountains and in the valley my mind is full of the overwhelming kindness and hospitality of all kinds of people. My warm thanks go to you, to your colleagues and to all others who honoured me by their friendship and comradeship. Kashmir and its people will always remain in my mind and heart and I trust that they will move unitedly to the goal of prosperity and freedom. I hope you are better now.

1. Sent from Murree on 22 August 1945. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

#### 11. To Mirza Beg<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
September 3, 1945

My dear Mr. Beg,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter. I am glad to know that Sheikh Saheb is recovering. What a lot of trouble was caused to him by an unfortunate

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Mirza Mohamad Afzal Beg (b. 1908); arrested for Quit Kashmir agitation, 1946; Minister in Sheikh Abdullah's Cabinet, 1948; founded Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front, 1955; accused in Kashmir Conspiracy Case, 1964; arrested with Sheikh Abdullah and detained at Ootacamund, 1965; released, 1967; exiled from Kashmir, 1971; allowed to re-enter, 1972; Minister for Revenue, Industry and Commerce, 1975-77; Deputy Chief Minister, 1977-78.

accident and yet perhaps we ought to be thankful for both he and I might easily have lost our eyesight.<sup>3</sup>

I must thank you for all the courtesy and friendship you showed me during my stay in Srinagar. I have brought back with me vivid memories of this visit, of the many friends I met there.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. On 19 August 1945, when Jawaharlal and Sheikh Abdullah were driving together to the office of the National Conference in Srinagar, where Jawaharlal was to address the Conference workers, the crowd cheered them and exploded crackers. A cracker hit the face of Sheikh Abdullah and injured him.

## 12. Congress Support for States People's Demands<sup>1</sup>

The broad policy of the Congress is to satisfy the aspirations of the people of the Indian States. It strives for the establishment of a full democratic self-government in the States within a united federated India. The Congress is concerned with the future of the States people. The Congress insists that power should be transferred to the people of the States so that they may decide their own future. The rulers will remain as long as they serve their subjects and respect their wishes.

I fail to understand the charge, often made against the Congress, that it is indifferent to the States people. It is a strange notion. One of the two main points on which the Congress took strong objection to the Cripps proposals related to the absence of any policy to deal with the question of the States people. It is not clear in Lord Wavell's new plan either.<sup>2</sup>

**Question:** It may be suggested that the Congress should officially affiliate or recognise the States people's organisations.

**Jawaharlal Nehru:** The Congress will certainly help them, as it has been doing all along and the more so, as the issue of Indian States forms an

1. Address to a meeting of States people's workers, Bombay, 26 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 27 September 1945.
2. Lord Wavell's proposals were limited to British India and did not extend to the Indian States.



integral part of the question of Indian independence. The Congress derives its strength from the masses and it is, therefore, necessary that the peoples of the States should become organisationally strong and get themselves involved in the national cause. The Congress does not believe in merely passing resolutions unless they have the national sanction behind them. It is an extraordinary misconception to think that the Congress Working Committee or the All India Congress Committee is the foundation of the Congress. The real strength of the Congress is in the villages where the village Congress committees are functioning with the full support of the peasants. I, therefore, ask you to strengthen your organisations to obtain popular sanction behind your demands.

### 13. The Princes and the People<sup>1</sup>

One day, even on Delhi's Red Fort, the Indian national flag will fly. This major fact will influence the whole country, including the States.

The demand of the States people's movement is for responsible government which will allow the Princes to remain, provided they agree to hand over the reins of administration to the people's representatives. So far as the smaller States are concerned, their existence as independent entities is impossible in the future. They have either to cooperate with each other, and evolve bigger units, or merge themselves with the neighbouring provinces. In this way alone can these States obtain a status equal to that of the provinces.

The Princes must ask themselves how the States will remain in their present position when the whole map of India is changed. They have been repeatedly requested, in resolutions and speeches, to understand the significance of the changing times. Their reply has been to refer to their treaties, engagements and *sanads*. What significance have they now after 150 years? Even granting their significance, nothing whatsoever will be allowed to stand in the way of people's rights.

While formerly the Princes refused to understand the changing times, they now say that they understand their implications. But when it is a

1. Speech at Jaipur, 22 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 24 October 1945.

question of doing something, they have always failed. This is the last opportunity for me to warn that the situation in India is soon going to take a turn, whether anyone wants it or not.

None knows what lies ahead, but there is no doubt that this time India is bent on complete independence. The rulers of the States will do well to effect the required changes themselves. It is better they do it themselves than be forced by others.

The criticism that the Congress has forgotten the people of the States is wrong because the States' boundaries intermix with those of British India, and it is not possible to forget or leave out the States. Ultimately, the States people have to rely on themselves for winning their objective, and no amount of outside help can bring them the desired result.

The question of Congress relationship with the States people's movement is again agitating the minds of the Congress leaders, and the Congress constitution might even be amended<sup>2</sup> to suit whatever policy is eventually decided upon.

I am of the view that the time has come for closer association of the States with British India. The old demand of the Congress for a constituent assembly can be acceptable only if room is found in it for representatives of the States. Nominees of the Princes will only make the assembly useless.

The moneyed men of Rajputana made more money out of people's distress in Bengal and elsewhere. Small fractions of the huge profit, distributed in charity, will not solve the basic problem of disparity between the rich and the poor. A change of officers, from white to black, will not also do the trick. Traditional rights should not be allowed to stand in the way of people's rights. It is the people's right to have the panchayat raj.

I very much appreciate the purse presented by the Harijans of the State. But I am ashamed of accepting any money from those who are victims of the evils of society. I call upon the country to remove the blot of untouchability before it can prove its fitness for independence.

2. At the Haripura Congress of 1938, the organisation of Congress committees in the Indian States was sanctioned provided that they undertook neither parliamentary activity nor direct action in the name of the Congress.



#### 14. Responsible Government for the States<sup>1</sup>

In view of the proposals for changes in the constitution of India broadcast by the British Prime Minister and the Viceroy and Crown Representative in India in September last,<sup>2</sup> the Standing Committee wishes to declare afresh that such changes can only be acceptable if they are based on full responsible government in the States as integral parts of a free India. Further that any constitution-making body should have as its members from the States representatives of the people elected on a wide franchise, which should at least approximate to the franchise at present prevailing for the Legislative Assemblies in the Provinces. Such representatives will represent the people's wishes and will have the same status and representative character as the members from the Provinces. Any other method of representation in the constituent assembly will necessarily mean a lower status for the members from the States and a joining together of democratic representatives and autocratic nominees, which will be a travesty of democratic procedure and is likely to lead to deadlock. It is essential therefore that the States' people should be represented on a fully democratic basis.

The Standing Committee has noted the statements made by, or on behalf of, some ruling Princes to the effect that they are desirous of enlarging the liberties of their people and do not wish to come in the way of India's freedom. While appreciating these sentiments, the Committee would point out that vague statements are not helpful at present when final decisions are impending. The States' People's Conference would willingly cooperate with the rulers and Governments of the States on the basis indicated above with a view to the establishment of responsible government in the States in line with the democratic governments in the provinces. In particular, any change in the policy of the States' Governments must begin with the full recognition of civil liberties without which it is impossible to have free elections or to make any substantial progress in the direction of freedom and representative institutions.

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed by the Standing Committee of the States People's Conference at Jaipur on 24 October 1945. A.I.C.C. File No. 118/1945-48, p. 467, N.M.M.L.
2. In his statement of 19 September 1945 the Viceroy had said that he would discuss with the representatives of the Indian States on how best they could play their part in setting up a constitution-making body.

### 15. On the Reforms in Rewa State<sup>1</sup>

During my tour in Rajputana I read a brief report of the announcement made by the Maharaja of Rewa granting full responsible government to his people.<sup>2</sup> On my return to Allahabad, I have read this statement in full. I am not fully acquainted with recent developments in the domestic politics of Rewa, but even apart from these, the Dusserha proclamation of the Maharaja of Rewa is significant and of far-reaching importance. I welcome it both for Rewa and as an instance of what should be done in other States.

All other questions in Rewa take a second place before this primary issue and they can be considered later. I should like to congratulate the Maharaja on the lead he has given and the people of Rewa on this achievement which should lead soon to their goal of responsible government in Rewa as an integral part of free India. I should also like to congratulate our Congress colleagues in Rewa who have laboured so long for the cause of freedom and responsible government. But the people of Rewa must remember that there may still be many hitches and obstructions in their way and freedom is not easily obtained and has to be vigilantly guarded. Also that freedom involves responsibility and obligations. I hope the people of Rewa will rise to the occasion and prove themselves worthy of the new opportunities opening out before them.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 30 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 31 October 1945.
2. On 19 October 1945, Gulab Singh, the Maharaja of Rewa, conferred on his State full responsible government, adult franchise and a common electorate.

### 16. The Danger of Belonging to the Past<sup>1</sup>

When I came to Rajputana, I tried to find a link between the past and the present and to look to the future. I consider it dangerous to belong

1. Speech at Mayo College, Ajmer, 14 November 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 15 November 1945.



to the past for, although the past belongs to us, we are not actually in the past.

Most of the ruling families in Rajputana run into the past. I would ask the boys studying in the college to value their traditions, which are not the personal heritage of any one family, but are the common heritage of India as a whole and are a matter for pride. The Rajputs have many excellent qualities — courage, chivalry, sticking to their word even at the cost of their life — but all these have become static, so that, in the course of the last few centuries, the Rajputs have not been able to play their part so well on the chess-board of Indian history.

Europe, Asia and India have during the last 150 years witnessed the greatest changes since the world began. But there have been astoundingly few changes in India and it is surprising how we have survived.

I feel proud as an inheritor of the great past of India about which we must talk in terms of reverence. But reverence is one thing and to become a slave of the past is another. We have the look of age in our eyes and something of the wisdom of an ancient race on our faces. Our racial consciousness is like a palimpsest in as much as layers and layers of past traditions lay hidden in our sub-conscious minds. They, no doubt, produce mental equipoise but at the same time retard progress on account of the dust that has accumulated over them.

When I come to Rajputana I experience very strange feelings. I like this place. Every stone speaks of India's history. I like these relics of old India that are not found elsewhere. But at the same time I feel suffocated by a sense of fear, misery and oppression pervading the atmosphere. A sense of stagnation creeps gradually upon me. I do not like it.

On speaking about the duties of the Princes towards their people, I cite Shaw's definition of a gentleman. I agree with Shaw that a gentleman is a person who gives more than he receives from society. Most people are only receptacles for others' offerings while others give, and give from childhood till death. A true gentleman is one who gives without receiving anything. This giving is reckoned not in gold and silver but in terms of work and service. The Princes should ask themselves what they are receiving from their people and what they are giving in return.

People are talking today of this vested right or that, or of preserving this interest or that. This whole conception implies stability and someone standing as a *chowkidar* for safeguarding it. But there is no safeguard other, and better, than mutual goodwill which goes a long way in taking a nation forward.

Polo is a fine game. I would like to have a chance of playing polo. Unfortunately, I do not get a chance. But polo cannot take one far in life.

It is obvious that India is going to be independent and the Indian States are going to be part of this India. We cannot have two standards of living and civil liberties. The Indian States have to consider how they are going to fit in with these changes which are coming with extreme rapidity. Obviously, it involves a democratic form of government in the States.

I am a rebel in the sense that I refuse to accept any dogma, whether political or religious. There should be nothing dogmatic even about socialism. It must fit in with the conditions in a particular country. Marx had failed to look ahead. Socialism to be successful must be in accordance with the fundamental genius of a country. I foresee India as a great and powerful nation with something to give to all without receiving anything, in the spirit of the true gentleman.

## 17. To the Maharaja of Tripura<sup>1</sup>

Calcutta  
December 9, 1945

Dear Maharaja Saheb,

I am informed that many members of Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad and the Tripura State Congress have for a long time been imprisoned without trial.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the war apparently a number of them were imprisoned without trial. Whether they are prisoners of the Bengal Government or Tripura State I don't know. Further information has reached me that the treatment of these prisoners is exceedingly bad and some of them have been suffering from serious diseases.

Further I understand that since the beginning of 1940, all meetings and processions and other demonstrations have been banned in the State and that civil liberty of any kind does not exist. I am surprised that such a state of affairs exists in any State in India today. I shall be grateful to you if you will correct me if my facts are wrong. If they are not

1. *The Tripura Chronicle* published this letter in its issue marking the 25th anniversary of independence, 15 August 1972.
2. Some political prisoners who had been transferred from Bengal jails to the Tripura State jail had their status undefined and were not entitled to the family pension given to security prisoners.



wrong I trust that you will kindly remove this blot on the State administration.

I shall appreciate if an answer is sent to my home address — Anand Bhawan, Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 18. On the Situation in Rewa State<sup>1</sup>

The present situation in Rewa requires careful handling. The Maharaja's declaration in favour of responsible government was welcomed by all Congressmen as pointing the right path, quite apart from the internal complications and problems of Rewa State. That proclamation has been and should be in future accepted fully, and the Political Department should be asked to implement it. The Maharaja's action in regard to this proclamation should be appreciated and he should be encouraged to pursue the matter further.

Other questions, however, arise which somewhat complicate the issue. There is the question of the Maharaj Kumar being sent abroad, probably Egypt, and there are other internal questions.<sup>2</sup> I am not competent to express an opinion about these internal matters without much greater knowledge than I possess. It seems to me, however, that there is a danger of the main issue of responsible government being pushed into the background by other and minor questions, if these latter are emphasised at this stage. Whatever the importance of these internal questions, they are obviously secondary to the main issue. Any emphasis on internal conflicts will not only divert attention but might enable the Political Department to take advantage of the new situation that might arise and take action which may injure our cause, as well as the objective

1. Note written for Congressmen, 27 December 1945. A.I.C.C. File No. 101/1945-48, N.M.M.L.
2. On 18 December 1945, students and businessmen of Rewa State observed a hartal as a protest against the action contemplated by the Government to send away the Maharaj Kumar from the State with a view to preventing him from helping his father, the ruler of Rewa State, in effecting constitutional reforms.

which the Maharaja has laid down. Congressmen should, therefore, concentrate on the issue of responsible government and offer to cooperate fully with the Maharaja in realising this. They should call upon the Political Department to implement the declaration. They should not entangle themselves in internal conflicts which have no bearing on this issue.

As regards the Maharaj Kumar being sent abroad it is clear that any compulsion in this matter is most objectionable. Normally any such arrangement should be made with the consent of the Maharaj Kumar and his parents. The Maharaj Kumar is no minor and his wishes must have precedence over others. If the Maharaj Kumar does not wish to go, it is up to him to say so clearly and openly and if he is sent even then, it is right and proper for the strongest exception to be taken to this. He cannot be allowed to be treated as a prisoner.

I understand that considerable agitation has been going on in Rewa to prevent the Maharaj Kumar's visit abroad. I can understand this agitation only if the Maharaj Kumar himself is unwilling to go. Till that point is cleared up the agitation loses much of its force. In any event it seems to me that any big action in this matter is likely to interfere with the major issue referred to above. We must do nothing to allow the Political Department to sidetrack the major issue.

I have received an application from a newly formed Praja Parishad in Rewa. It is usually undesirable for overlapping organisations to be started in one place. As the Congress committee is functioning there it is not clear why the Praja Parishad has been started. Not knowing all the facts, I cannot give an opinion. The Praja Parishad as a new organisation cannot be affiliated to the States People's Conference without full enquiry.

Congressmen in Rewa should therefore follow the line suggested above, and should avoid controversy and conflict with other organisations or entanglement in local disputes. They must build up popular strength to support the declaration of the Maharaja in favour of responsible government.

This note is not meant for publication but for private information of Congressmen concerned.



## 19. The States People's and the National Movements<sup>1</sup>

We are now on the threshold of big happenings all over India, and the States will inevitably be influenced and drawn into the new scheme of things likely to emerge.

The National Conference is already wellknown all over India for its gallant struggle for freedom and responsible government. It is desirable, however, that closer contacts are established between the movement in Kashmir and that in the other States and in India as a whole.

Kashmir should know more of what is happening in the rest of India, and the rest of India should know more of what is happening in Kashmir. For, after all, we stand or fall together. Without understanding each other there can be no full and efficient cooperation.

This edition of the *Khidmat* will help in this understanding and in widening our respective horizons. Under the able leadership of Sheikh Abdullah, the Kashmir National Conference has grown on a democratic and nationalistic basis. I feel sure the *Khidmat* will be a good worker, carrying the message of freedom and unity to all. I send it all my good wishes in this noble task.

1. Message on the occasion of the publication of the first issue in English of *Khidmat*, which was the official organ of the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. From *The Hindustan Times*, 30 December 1945.

## 20. Towards a New Destiny<sup>1</sup>

We meet at this conference after nearly seven years — a long period, made longer by the tremendous events of these years and the experiences we have gone through. These experiences have taught us many lessons,

1. Presidential address to the All India States People's Conference, Udaipur, 30 December 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 31 December 1945.

but though we may be wiser, that wisdom has not brought us comfort or joy or an assurance of that new world order of peace and freedom for which we and hundreds of millions all over the world craved. The tragedy of the two great wars is over but the tragedy of the seeming peace pursues us and darkens the horizon. Lives were squandered by the million in the name of democracy and peace and freedom, yet those who held the reins of power thought and worked only for retaining what they had, of preserving the old order, and of denying what they themselves proclaimed so loudly. And because they saw no new world order, they now prepare for a new war. Again, as of old, the people were being betrayed and the real fight for freedom has yet to take place.

We in this conference are especially concerned with the ninety million people of the Indian States, but their fate is linked up with the three hundred millions of the rest of India and with the vaster numbers of the world as a whole. And so even to understand the problems of the States we must understand the problem of India and see it in the wider context of the world situation.

The war has shaken up Asia and Europe, broken down old frontiers, upset in many ways the old economic foundations, let loose new forces, and out of this turmoil new patterns are arising. The resistance movements to which the war gave birth find it difficult to fit into the existing framework. Three dominant powers seem to control the destinies of the world but of these three, Great Britain already occupies a secondary position and is destined to play a subsidiary role. Two remain — the United States of America and the Soviet Union — and both are powerfully expansionist in their different ways. Their ideals differ, their economies are entirely opposed to each other, and each is trying to consolidate its position and extend its influence. The Soviet Union has built up a number of client states and in this process has put an end to many relics of feudalism in Eastern Europe. That process has now been directed to the Middle East and Iran is at present experiencing both internal conflict and external pressure. In the Far East the great country of China has recently had the misfortune to revert to civil conflict, and behind the scenes other forces are at play. It would appear that the only satisfactory solution is for a united China to be built up on a fully democratic basis.

In South East Asia, Indonesia and Indo-China are carrying on a heroic struggle against imperialism, and in both, Britain has stepped in to help in crushing the people. There is a perilous semblance between these wars of intervention carried on by Britain and that other war of intervention, which fascist Italy and Nazi Germany waged in Spain, and which was the prelude to World War II. For us in India these strug-



gles in Indonesia and Indo-China are of peculiar interest and importance and affect us intimately. We have watched British intervention there with growing anger and shame and helplessness that Indian troops should thus be used for doing Britain's dirty work against our friends who are fighting the same fight as we. Recently we have had revealing glimpses, through the thick veil of the censorship, of the way British, French and Dutch imperialisms have been functioning in South East Asia. Those glimpses have made us sick with horror and disgust, for they have equalled the atrocity stories from Germany.

This is the way imperialism still functions in Asia. It is the way of revolting cruelty and brutality and frightfulness and a complete denial of the right to freedom. In Siam, Britain wants to extend her imperial influence. In Malaya, she is consolidating her economic hold and extending it. In Burma and Ceylon she intends to hold on as long as she can. In India we know from recent experience how she is trying to delay and obstruct any real change.

These are not the obvious signs of a decaying imperialism and yet it becomes increasingly clear that Britain is fighting a losing battle and the sources of her old imperial strength are drying up. Though her interests conflict in many ways with those of America, still circumstances are compelling her to seek American aid and to play a secondary role to America's in the major struggle for a dominant position in the world.

The United States, intent also on that major struggle and the diplomatic and economic preparation for it, and anxious to have others line up with it, appears to favour the continuation in some form of the British empire. Recent developments would seem to indicate that America is underwriting this empire, possibly with suitable minor changes. That is a big decision to take, fraught with the gravest consequences for all concerned. For it is certain, as anything can be certain in this uncertain world, that the countries of Asia will not submit willingly to any empire or any domination and will revolt against it. It will be a continuing revolt of millions with a passion behind it which even the atom bomb will not suppress. And from that revolt will develop that terrible thing, the third world war.

It has been suggested that Asian nations should hold together to meet the menace of imperialism. That is an inevitable development and these nations will naturally look to those who favour their freedom.

In India we stand on the verge of big developments, which will probably be initiated more by the people than by the British Government. The attempt of this Government to crush the national movement during the past three and a half years, with all the horror and brutality that accompanied it, has failed, and the Indian people are stronger

and more determined to achieve their freedom than ever. I have noticed, wherever I have gone, a tension and a fever of impatience, a fierce desire to be rid of foreign rule, a resolve not to submit whatever the consequence. With this temper in the country it is not possible to carry on in the old way or to delay and procrastinate. If a change—a radical change from top to bottom—does not come soon, a great crisis will come in its place.

The people of the Indian States have moved with the rest of India. They played a notable part in 1942 and after and today they are astir as they have never been before. The fact that we are meeting in the ancient and historic city of Udaipur is evidence of the growth of the States people's movement.

But while the people have advanced, their autocratic governments remain where they were, or if there has been a change it is so small as to be imperceptible. They are relics of a bygone age, dependent completely on the British power, which created many of them and has deliberately kept them unchanged so as to use them as its instruments for maintaining its supremacy in India. Lord Canning, the Viceroy, wrote in 1860: "It was long ago said by Sir John Malcolm that if we made all India into *jillahs* (that is districts in British India) it was not in the nature of things that our empire should last fifty years; but that if we could keep up a number of native states without political power, but as royal instruments, we should exist in India as long as our naval supremacy was maintained. Of the substantial truth of this opinion I have no doubt; and the recent events have made it more deserving of our attention than ever."

A writer has called the Indian States 'Britain's fifth column in India'. The history of the last hundred and fifty years justifies this nomenclature. Rushbrook Williams, a representative and advocate of the States, wrote in 1930: "The situations of these feudatory states, checkerboarding all India as they do, are a great safeguard. It is like establishing a vast network of friendly fortresses in debatable territory. It would be difficult for a general rebellion against the British to sweep India because of this network of powerful, loyal native states."

Frequently we criticise and blame the rulers of the States, and often they are deserving of censure. But it is well to remember that they are mere shadows cast by the imperial power and the responsibility for the backward condition of the States rests with that power which has deliberately kept them as they are and prevented their progress. It is well known that Princes with advanced or independent views are not favoured by the Political Department of the Government of India. Many of them are saddled with ministers imposed by this Political Department.



In dealing with the States, therefore, we deal with the British Government in another guise. As soon as that Government goes from India, the problem changes completely. This fact has been stressed recently by a British authority, Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, in his book *The Indian States and Indian Federation* (1942). "The States," he says, "are still so numerous in India that they offer a grave conundrum in evolution to which no solution is at present forthcoming. Their disappearance and absorption would, of course, be inevitable if Britain ever ceased to be the supreme power as regards India." It is interesting to note that the Nizam of Hyderabad, who now claims independence,<sup>2</sup> echoed these sentiments in a statement issued by him about a year ago.

De Montmorency says that no solution of the problem is forthcoming, and yet he himself suggests the obvious solution: by the elimination of the British Power from India many of our problems, including the communal problem, would be solved. When does this happy consummation take place? Hence the demand: Quit India.

When this is the position it becomes irrelevant and absurd to talk of treaty rights or so-called independence. Indeed no responsible person can take shelter behind those treaties of over a hundred years ago.<sup>3</sup> It is well to remember also that out of 600 States only about 40 have such treaties. The relations of the other States with the British paramount power are regulated by engagements, *sanads*, usages, sufferance, political practices and conventions. The States vary enormously in size, importance and resources, the great majority of them not being States at all but estates with some especial privileges attached to their rulers. In the Government of India Act of 1935 only 143 are considered important enough to be mentioned, and of these only 52 are given separate representations in the proposed federal legislature, the remaining 91 being grouped together for that purpose.

Thus it is absurd to group all these so-called States together as if their problems were similar. The first step to be taken is to separate those which can function effectively as units from those that cannot. What is to be the test? The Ludhiana conference laid this down in terms of population and revenue and it was a test that could be easily

2. The Nizam was at this time thinking of cutting off Hyderabad State from the rest of India and maintaining it under the suzerainty or paramountcy of Britain.
3. On 17 March 1942, the Chamber of Princes welcomed the Cripps proposals on condition that their treaty rights were protected. In fact the Standing Committee of the Chamber withdrew its resignation announced in December 1944 after what they held to be an unsatisfactory reply from the Crown Representative about the position of the treaties.

applied.<sup>4</sup> Probably it will be better to tighten this test still further. But the real test is: Can a State as constituted afford modern standards of social and economic welfare? If it cannot, then it must be absorbed in a larger unit. If it can live up to these standards then it will form an autonomous unit in the Indian federation. Probably according to any reckoning there will be less than twenty such States.

The way of approach to this problem is to make the people's welfare and progress the primary consideration. All other matters are secondary and must yield place to them. This involves political freedom, a democratic structure, fundamental liberties and rights guaranteed and an independent judiciary. It involves equally economic freedom and the removal of all fetters, feudal or other, on the growth of the individual. In some of the States in Rajputana there are still shameful relics which no modern state should tolerate. There is a kind of slavery under the Daroga system under which women suffer even more than men. There is *begar* or forced labour. There is the *jagiri* system of feudatories with important judicial, revenue, police and other powers, which makes these *jagirs* even more feudal and backward than other areas. Then there are backward classes and aboriginals who are kept down by law and custom and have no scope for growth.

It is patent that all these ancient and harmful relics will have to go if the people as a whole are to raise themselves out of the morass of poverty and degradation in which they have remained for so long. For the future that we envisage must provide for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen, man or woman, and legal as well as social tyranny and injustice must be removed.

What of the Princes? Whatever their individual virtues or failings may be, it is really the system with which we are concerned. For that system the British Government has been and is responsible. Our approach to the Princes should be a friendly one, an invitation to them to join hands in the great tasks ahead. They must realise that these tasks have to be undertaken, that great changes must come, that they cannot rely for long on the protection of an alien power. At no time was such reliance becoming or patriotic; in today's context there is no place for it and even self-interest should point in another direction. The direction is towards the people. No man can say what the future will be in India for the world changes rapidly and we have to keep pace with it. And so no man can say what the future of the Princes will be.

4. In 1939, the All India States People's Conference, at its Ludhiana session, demanded the integration of the States with the rest of India.



Only those of us who fit in with changing conditions can find a suitable place in that future. Ultimately it will be for the people of India to decide this as other problems. But in the near future it may be given to us to mould events and we should try to make the transition rapid but smooth for all concerned.

As I have said, it is inevitable that the vast majority of States which cannot possibly form economic units should be absorbed into neighbouring areas. It seems to me important that this absorption should be with the provinces and not with other existing States, as has recently been done in Western India.<sup>5</sup> It is also not desirable that a number of small States should be grouped together to form a larger state unit.<sup>6</sup> There will be no history or tradition or unity about this; only an artificial joining together of backward areas with no leaven to pull them up. Therefore the union should be with provinces. The rulers of such small states may be given some kind of pension and may be further encouraged to serve in a different capacity if they are fit enough for this.

Of the other States, which may be fifteen to twenty in number and which will form autonomous units in the federation, the rulers can remain as constitutional heads under a democratic system of government. Some of these Princes and rulers belong to ancient houses intimately connected with history and tradition. Who can forget the brave deeds of the Rajputs of old, or the proud role that the Suryavanshis of Mewar have played in India's story?

But democracy cannot tolerate any form of autocracy; the two are incompatible. At present, with possibly only one solitary exception, there is autocracy in all States, in spite of certain reforms. This autocracy has even been given a metaphysical theory to support it in that premier State of India, Hyderabad, which is first not only in size but also in the denial of all civil and democratic liberty. In the proposed Hyderabad reforms it is stated: "The head of the State represents the people directly in his own person, and his connection with them, therefore, is more natural and abiding than that of any passing elected representatives. He is both the supreme head of the State and embodiment of the "people's sovereignty". Hence it is that, in such policy the Head of the State not merely retains the power to confirm or veto any piece of legislation, but also enjoys a special prerogative to make or unmake

5. In 1943, the smaller states in Kathiawar and Gujarat were attached to larger neighbouring states for the purpose of administration.

6. In 1944 the states in Central India and Eastern States Agency, which were too small to support an efficient administration, had been combined into groups.

his executive or change the machinery of government through which he meets the growing needs of his people."

In complete contrast with this is the recent constitution of the little State of Aundh. This lays down that the Raja shall be "the first servant and conscience-bearer of the people," and the elected legislature has been made the supreme authority in the State, the ruler having a suspensory veto only. Even his privy purse is subjected to the veto of the legislature. This small State has amply justified its democracy in many ways and has also evolved a simple, cheap and rapidly-functioning judicial system.

Recently the ruler of Rewa State announced the grant of responsible government to his people. The announcement was made in peculiar circumstances when he himself had been deprived of his normal powers by the Political Department of the Government of India. Nevertheless it should be welcomed by us and implemented by the Political Department. Any obstruction or delay will naturally lead to the conclusion that the Government of India does not approve of responsible government in the States.

The major Indian States, under a reformed and democratic system of administration, can play an important and distinctive part as autonomous units in the federation. They have often preserved some of the old artistic and cultural traditions, as well as craftsmanship, which unhappily are so rare in India today.

There is a great deal of talk today of imminent changes in the constitution of India, of a constitution-making body, and of a subsequent treaty between India and England. What is now happening in India and England does not lead one to hope that any substantial steps are going to be taken soon and probably there will be further attempts at delay, or something that is not acceptable may be proposed. The British Government has in the past encouraged all kinds of disruptive and fissiparous tendencies in India — communal and State — as well as socially reactionary groups. There are no signs yet that they have changed their policy and we may have much trouble in store for us in the near future. Yet it is clear that conditions cannot remain static. A major change must come, and the constitution of free India will have to be drawn up ultimately by the elected representatives of the people. That constitution will have to be for a democratic state of the federal type with a great deal of autonomy for the federating units. Such a federation, the National Congress has declared, must be a willing union of its various parts, with a minimum list of common and essential federal subjects which will apply to all units, and a further optional list of common subjects which may be accepted by such units as desire to do so. This



will give the maximum of freedom to the constituent units and allow them to develop according to their own wishes. The major States should be able to fit in easily in such a constitution.

How will the constitution-making body or constituent assembly be formed and what powers will it possess? It will make a great deal of difference as to whether it is merely an advisory body or has final authority to give shape to the constitution. As an advisory body it will have little value and the people will not look to it for a solution but elsewhere, as they have done in the past. It is important therefore that the constituent assembly should have full power and no external authority should interfere with its decisions.

It has long been the demand of the National Congress that the constituent assembly should consist of representatives elected by adult franchise. In existing circumstances it might be difficult, without undue delay, to arrange for an election on this basis. But it is essential that the assembly should be elected and based on a wide franchise. Proposals that a small group of representative men and women should form such an assembly, because it is easier for a small group to consider such matters than for a large assembly, are dangerous and should not be countenanced. A small group, however, would contain a proportionately larger number of conservative and reactionary individuals who might resist every important change. They will continue to think along old grooves and come up again and again against the same difficulties which they have failed to surmount in the past. But a large assembly, elected on a wide franchise, will function in a different environment and will attach more importance to the vital economic issues of the day. The principal decisions must be taken by this general assembly and then the working out of detail can be left to smaller committees.

You will remember that the Cripps proposals of 1942 proposed a constituent assembly of elected representatives from the provinces and nominees of rulers from the States. The ninety million people of the States were ignored and this was deeply resented by them. This indeed was one of the reasons why the National Congress rejected those proposals. No constituent assembly, or any other assembly, formed in this way, can function properly or be accepted. That applies to the federation also. Even before the Cripps proposals, just after the Government of India Act of 1935 had been passed, the late Professor Berriedale Keith, the eminent authority on the British Commonwealth and Indian constitution, wrote: "It is impossible for the Crown's advisers to contend that the people of the States shall be denied the rights of Indians in the provinces, and it is their clear duty to advise the King-Emperor to use his authority to secure that the Princes shall enter into

constitutional reforms which will result at no distant date in securing responsible government therein. No federation can be deemed in the interest of India, if in it the representatives of the people of the provinces are compelled to sit with the nominees of irresponsible rulers. There is, in fact, no answer to Mr. Gandhi's claim that the Princes are bound to follow the Crown in its transfer of authority to the people."

Keith's last sentence refers to the recent claim, put forward by some Princes, that they were somehow apart from the rest of India and had direct relations with the Crown of England. This claim has no basis in fact or history, and still less is it likely to have any substance in any future arrangement. But the British Government was interested in it as it gave them a pretext for putting up a barrier between the States and the rest of India, and the Viceroy became the Crown Representative in relation to the States.

The Standing Committee of the States People's Conference has throughout made it clear that States' representatives in the constituent assembly must be elected. Recently at Jaipur it stated "that any constitution-making body should have as its members from the States representatives of the people elected on a wide franchise, which should at least approximate to the franchise at present prevailing for the legislative assemblies in the provinces. Such representatives will represent the people's wishes and will have the same status and representative character as the members from the provinces. Any other method of representation in the constituent assembly will necessarily mean a lower status for the members from the States and a joining together of democratic representatives and autocratic nominees, which will be a travesty of democratic procedure and is likely to lead to deadlock. It is essential therefore that the States people should be represented on a fully democratic basis."

It is to be remembered that the legislatures that exist at present in a few of the States have not only no real power but are constituted in such a way as to contain a large nominated element.

Proper democratic representations in the constituent assembly necessarily implies the introduction of democracy in the internal affairs of the State. Otherwise there would be conflict between these representatives and the state government. A state which does not come up to the level of the rest of India in regard to elected legislatures and responsible government, fundamental liberties, and independence of the judiciary, will be an anachronism in the federation. Membership of the federal union will be a privilege and it will be for the people of India to decide whether such a state is worthy of being admitted to the federation or not.



It is our basic policy that there should be full responsible government in the states as integral parts of a free India. In such a free India there may be variations as between the various federating units, but there must be some common background of free institutions and standards of social and economic welfare. India cannot be free and unfree in parts.

Our future ultimately depends on the strength, cohesion and unity of our people. It is the purpose of this conference and the organisation behind it to help in building these up. We have done good work in the past but it was limited in extent. We have had to face formidable obstacles which have often prevented us from reaching our people. But those obstacles gradually fade away and our united strength grows. We have to remember always that our work and our organization must be for all, and more especially for those at the bottom of the social scale who require help and encouragement most. We cannot work for one group or community, nor permit communalism, which has done so much injury to India, to influence our activity. In this, as in some other matters, we must learn the lesson of unity which the Indian National Army has so well demonstrated.

In order to work more efficiently and on a more extensive scale we have made many changes in our constitution, which will come up before this conference for confirmation. These changes will make the organization more representative of the people of the States and the various people's organizations in the different States. But we have to remember that even now there are some States so backward and reactionary as to prevent the functioning of the people's organizations. Among these is Hyderabad where for many years past the State Congress has been under a ban. It is a little absurd to think of major changes when these primary rights are denied to our people. Also reports reach us continually of oppression and suppression in many States. Bikaner has recently achieved an unenviable notoriety in this respect. Conditions in State prisons are particularly bad and the lot of political prisoners deplorable. Of the many martyrs to our cause I should like to mention especially the name of Shri Deva Suman of Tehri State. Many of us will remember this brave and earnest youth who worked for the freedom of the people of the States. He was practically done to death by the treatment given to him in prison by the State authorities.

We have big work ahead. Let us set about it with all the strength and earnestness we possess.

## 21. Adult Franchise for States People<sup>1</sup>

Adult franchise is a worthy ideal. The goal of the Congress is also adult franchise. But it is not practical politics at the present juncture to demand representation to the constituent assembly based on adult franchise. Between now and the next 12 months the standing committee should have a positive mandate from the conference to act upon and negotiate with the rulers. At present adult franchise is not practicable even in British provinces. It will be inadvisable to demand adult franchise just now from the rulers. Nobody can say what problems will come up during 1946, and the standing committee cannot be fettered in dealing with these problems.

1. Speech at the States People's Conference on a resolution which suggested that state representatives to the Central Assembly should be elected on a franchise approximate to that of provincial assemblies, Udaipur, 1 January 1946. From *National Herald*, 3 January 1946.

## 22. Divided India Unthinkable<sup>1</sup>

I reiterate the Congress stand *vis-a-vis* Pakistan. A free Indian government can never function if the federating units refuse to owe allegiance to the Centre. The Congress does not want to compel any unit to join the federation against its will. At the same time, the Congress is not prepared to make concessions to fissiparous tendencies and to demands which will disintegrate and ruin the country.

It is comparatively easy to unmake things, but difficult to construct them. Judged in the context of the world situation, Pakistan and similar slogans appear very petty.

Once the Congress concedes Pakistan, other reactionary and disintegrating forces, supported by certain vested interests, will crop up. Economic betterment and raising the standard of living will be impossible

1. Speech at the States People's Conference on a resolution welcoming the Congress election manifesto, Udaipur, 1 January 1946. From *National Herald*, 3 January 1946.



in a divided India. If certain units want to vote for separation, it will then be a different proposition. If a Bengali, whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim, wants separation, none can compel him to remain in the Indian union. I concede the right of separation to individual units in the sense that I would not compel or force unwilling units to federate. I am against the granting of an unrestricted right to separate. With freedom for a unit to secede, it will be impossible for a federal or unitary government to function. The constant threat of separation will demoralise the atmosphere, and no planning will be possible. The claim for Pakistan has no parallel in history. The problem is no doubt complicated, but as I have said, it is a very petty one, especially when one visualises the future of free India.

The Soviet example of complete autonomy for its units—even to separate—is often cited.<sup>2</sup> But the Soviet Union has given only complete cultural independence to its units, and politically they are not separated, and in fact it will be impossible for any unit, for instance Bukhara or Kazakstan, to lead an independent life. But what is demanded in India is quite different. If an unrestricted right of separation is granted neither the separated units nor the rest of India will be strong. All will be weaklings. Reactionarism will hold the ground. I would not oppose Muslims in the Punjab or Bengal if they vote for separation. But no one will allow them to drag the members of other communities with them. Certain interests, ever interested in spreading confusion, are sowing the seeds of disintegration. All progressive forces must oppose them.

2. In February 1944, Stalin promulgated a constitutional amendment permitting each of the 16 Soviet republics to have independent international relations and sign treaties with foreign powers.

### 23. Big Changes in the Offing<sup>1</sup>

I visualise big changes coming over India. I do not know what these changes are, but I expect trouble coming in their wake. I do not expect

1. Closing **speech** at the States People's Conference, Udaipur, 4 January 1946. From *National Herald*, 5 January 1946.

that quick solutions could be found for India's problems. There is no doubt that the present governments of States will have to change, whether they like it or not. And there will have to be very close approximation between Indian India and British India — an appellation which I do not like. It is no good arousing people's feelings, because the effects may be felt later.

It is notable that over 435 delegates from the States spread all over India have attended the conference. Several resolutions have been passed, the keynote of which is the demand for self-government. In one such resolution reference has been made to certain major States like Hyderabad, Travancore and Mysore. One could have mentioned scores of other States as well. Bigger States have been mentioned specially because what happens there affects other States.

It is unfortunate that even bigger States have not gone ahead of British India. In fact, they are far behind the provinces, though in certain matters as education, Travancore and Mysore are in advance of British India. Politically they are very backward. In all these States, there are certain representative assemblies which are, in fact, governed in a completely autocratic way. It strikes me as very odd that autocracies should persist in States which are educationally and industrially advanced.

The fault for the existence of autocracy, however, lies with the people. Everyone gets the kind of government he deserves, whether in the States or in British India. But the moment one feels that he deserves something better and has grown strong enough to push out the government, then autocracy will cease to exist.

Despite educational and industrial development in the southern States, the people are politically at a low ebb. I know the difficulties that face the people's movements in the States and the forces that are behind the States. Nevertheless, it is primarily the responsibility of the people of the States to find a solution for their problem and the solution lies in developing one's strength and not in submitting to evil.

As for myself, I am a disciplined soldier of the Indian National Congress and I do not wish to do anything that will undermine the discipline. But I would make it perfectly clear to my colleagues that there are certain matters which have nothing to do, so far as I am concerned, with the discipline of the Congress. They concern my personal feelings and my conception of national honour and if they are affected, I will react in my own way regardless of what the Congress thinks or does. One should develop the capacity to think as a free man.

The attitude of Hyderabad, Travancore and Mysore States towards the State Congress distresses, pains and angers me. It does not augur



well for these States to treat the States people's movement in a contemptuous manner. Notably the situation in Travancore pains me more.<sup>2</sup>

I am not going into the right or the wrong. I have become perhaps a little cautious in arriving at a judgment without listening to the various sides of the case. Listening to only one side gives a lopsided picture. Without passing any judgment as to what is happening in Travancore, I am prepared to say that what is happening is definitely objectionable, wrong and contemptuous of the people's movement. I have received telegrams about a ban in Travancore State on the hoisting of the national flag, processions and meetings for three months in certain towns. I am not prepared to tolerate anything that is done deliberately to dishonour the national flag.

From Mysore State I have heard alarming reports about famine. Famine conditions, as those that overtook Bengal, where 35 lakhs of people died, do not suddenly occur. They are the culmination of a series of processes of governmental policy. It appears that the various suggestions made by the people's representatives have been ignored by the Mysore State. In dealing with problems of food and the like, the Government should have the confidence and goodwill of the people. Goodwill, of course, it never has, because the States follow a policy of irritating the public.

Deplorable conditions prevail in certain States as Tonk and Bikaner where civil liberties have been totally denied.<sup>3</sup> Since my release, I have received numerous complaints about Bikaner. When the Standing Committee met in Kashmir, it was asked to pass a resolution on the subject. As a responsible body, we did not like to pass any resolution without investigation, and I enquired of the Bikaner State authorities. After my inquiries, I found that Bikaner State was responsible for the numerous complaints.

I deplore the conditions under which the political prisoners are kept in Indian State prisons. In certain States, political prisoners are made to live under insanitary and inhuman conditions.

2. The Government of Travancore, because of popular agitation against its educational policy, prohibited for three months from 29 December 1945 all processions and hoisting of the national flag.
3. The Praja Parishads in the States of Tonk and Bikaner demanded a new legislative assembly elected on adult franchise and a responsible government. Fearing popular agitation, the authorities curbed civil liberties and banned meetings and processions. The people of the two States then launched satyagraha in January 1946.

**24. Police Firing in Gwalior<sup>1</sup>**

The charges contained in the telegram<sup>2</sup> are exceedingly serious and they are made by a responsible and popular organisation which has already built for itself a strong position in the Gwalior State, and which is affiliated to the All India States People's Conference. I have no means of verifying them at present, but I am greatly disturbed and distressed, and I invite the Gwalior Government and the authorities of the Birla Mills immediately to inquire and answer these charges. It is intolerable that anything even approaching the allegations made should happen. No government and no industrial organisation can escape grave discredit unless it clears itself completely when such charges are made by responsible persons. Why should the police function like an army on a battlefield during industrial disputes?

Why should any director or manager of a factory or mill summon police aid during peaceful strikes? An immediate, impartial and searching inquiry, is necessary and punishment of those found guilty.

As president of the States People's Conference, I am requesting Dr. M. Atal to proceed to Gwalior immediately and inquire into this matter.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 15 January 1946. From *National Herald*, 16 January 1946.
2. The telegram sent by the Sarvajanik Sabha of Gwalior stated that the police opened fire for "three hours indiscriminately" and made lathi charges on workers on the eleventh day of a peaceful labour strike at the Birla Mills in Gwalior.

**25. To Madan Atal<sup>1</sup>**

15-1-1946

My dear Madan,

I have received a telegram from Shri Kushvan, General Secretary, Sarvajanik Sabha, and on the basis of this I have issued a statement to the press, a copy of which I enclose. In this statement, I have quoted the telegram. I have no further information about the events referred to. But they are of so serious a nature that I think we should immediately

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 76/1945-47, p. 56; N.M.M.L.



have some inquiry. I shall be grateful to you if you could go to Gwalior and inquire into this matter on my behalf. The inquiry should of course be conducted impartially and the versions of all the parties concerned taken. These parties are: the State authorities, the mill management, the workers and the people generally. The Gwalior Rajya Sarvajanik Sabha is a popular organisation of standing and repute, affiliated to the All India States People's organisation. It should prove particularly helpful to you in your task.

I shall expect a report from you. It is not desirable for you to make any press statement till I have seen the report, unless some development makes this necessary.

I am enclosing a letter of authority, as well as a letter addressed to the President of the Gwalior Rajya Sarvajanik Sabha, Lashkar. You had better send a telegram to the President of the Sarvajanik Sabha (Lashkar, Gwalior) intimating the time of your arrival there.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 26. Repression in Bharatpur<sup>1</sup>

I have met some members of the Bharatpur Rajya Praja Parishad and they have informed me of the recent development in the State involving the arrest and imprisonment of Shri Raj Bahadur, advocate, a prominent member of the Praja Parishad. I have seen also some of the statements and orders of the State authorities. I feel that the State authorities have not been following a wise policy and in particular, the imprisonment of Shri Raj Bahadur is extraordinary. Such arrests do not bring any credit to the administration.

However, in view of the declaration<sup>2</sup> made by the Chancellor in the Chamber of Princes yesterday on behalf of all the Princes there, I do

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 19 January 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 21 January 1946.
2. Made on 17 December 1945, it stated that "there shall be popular institutions with elected majorities to ensure close and effective association of the people with the governance of the States." The rights of civil liberty, property, equality before law, freedom of conscience, rights of free association, of free speech, etc., should be granted to the people of the States.

not wish to raise any controversial issues at present, and I would advise the Praja Parishad not to start any satyagraha. That declaration, if it means anything at all, means the fullest freedom of speech, association and action as well as a representative government. We have been told that it will be implemented immediately. If so, the first thing to be done in Bharatpur is to release Shri Raj Bahadur and any others who may have been imprisoned for political offences. Also the State authorities should cooperate with the Praja Parishad in dealing with the urgent economic and other problems, as well as the curse of corruption, which demand attention. I suggest to the Praja Parishad, therefore, to approach the ruler and request him to implement the declaration made in the Chamber of Princes immediately in the manner suggested above. Other steps in giving a really representative character to the administration should follow soon after. The Praja Parishad thus offers its cooperation in view of the declaration and on its basis provided its terms are implemented. Of course, it should be borne in mind that the Praja Parishad stands for full responsible government.

## 27. On the Princes' Declaration of Rights<sup>1</sup>

I welcome the declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on behalf of the Princes in the Chamber. In some matters it is vague, and I should have liked it to go further. Also, declarations by themselves do not go far. But I do not wish to lessen the significance of the declaration. It is a definite sign of the times and realisation of the big changes that are coming to India in the near future. The fact is that all over India the real balance of power is shifting to the people because the dominant power, that is the British Government, cannot function for long here. And India must find its equilibrium without the dominant power. The pending removal of this constraining force has immediately let loose new forces which had been arrested for so long, and which are trying to find a new equilibrium.

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 19 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 20 January 1946.



There will be many difficulties in finding this equilibrium, but given goodwill and earnestness on all sides, we shall undoubtedly reach it and give a mighty push to the onward march of free India. It is obvious that this equilibrium can only be based on the goodwill and cooperation of the people of India, both in the States and provinces. There can be no reliance on assurances and guarantees from outside. The future government of India, as well as the government of constituent units of India, will inevitably depend on the wishes of the people. It is out of place, therefore, to think in terms of any external authority guaranteeing anything. Nor is it dignified or becoming for the rulers to depend upon such external authority. As Indians their pride should be India, and their hope the future greatness of India. I wish that the Chamber had clearly accepted the principle of responsible government for the States, that is the major States which can stand by themselves as progressive and more or less self-sufficient units of the federation.

The smaller States would also have the same freedom but would have to be joined together with larger units in the federation or should form such a large unit themselves in order to play an effective and progressive part in future India. As I stated in my address at Udaipur, it is desirable for these small States to join the provinces and not larger States. But it is conceivable that some of these smaller States may themselves form a large unit, and if there is any real desire to introduce a free and progressive system of administration in such small States joined together, no barrier should be put in their way. But it must be realised, of course, that small States cannot function by themselves. We may indicate tests for deciding as to whether a State is big enough to remain a separate entity in the federation.

Such tests would concern themselves with population and revenue but the real test is whether an administration allowing freedom to the people and the same standards of efficiency and well-being and progress as in the rest of India can be maintained. There should be no difficulty in adjusting these matters because in any event the level of efficiency, well-being, progress and free institutions should be similar in all parts of India. It is clear that in India, as a whole, in the federation as in the constituent units, there should not be two standards.

It is admitted and recognised that we must have full responsible government in India as a whole and in the provinces. It follows inevitably that responsible government should also flourish in the States. There may be minor variations in different units, but the fundamental principles must necessarily be the same everywhere. The position of rulers thus becomes one of constitutional heads. A clear recognition of this fact will make it easier to go ahead.

In regard to the elected assemblies that are envisaged, it is desirable that they are wholly elected, and not partly elected and partly nominated, even though the elected element may be in a majority. These halfway houses do not and will not help. They sometimes produce conflict and inevitably they lead to the elimination of nominated elements. It is best to recognise this and go ahead as far as possible.

I have stated my views in regard to one or two matters which deserve attention. But I repeat that I welcome the step which the Chamber of Princes has taken and I congratulate them and the people of the States on it. This step represents the growing consciousness and strength of the people of the States as well as an attempt on the part of the Princes to break away from the leading strings of the paramount power and to look to their people in the States. That is a happy augury and if it is followed up in good faith and earnestness it will be a great service to India.

The goodwill of one leads to the goodwill and cooperation of the other. I hope that the rulers will realise that free institutions depend on the growth of popular organisations and will, therefore, remove immediately all barriers to the formation and working of Praja Mandals and other States People's organisations.

If that is done, I have no doubt that these Praja Mandals will function with sobriety and with the single aim of the good of the people. In these conditions there is no reason why the existing conflict between Princes and popular organisations should not lessen very greatly and a large measure of cooperation develop between them.

I do not know how far the declaration of the Chamber of Princes affects some of the larger States which are not represented in the Chamber. These States, in spite of their size and resources, are backward, and fundamental rights, elected assemblies and the rest envisaged in the declaration are not found in some of these States.

I hope that these big States will also come in line so that we may all cooperate together for the good and wellbeing and rapid advancement of all the people of India and the rebirth of a free and great Indian nation which can look at the world in the face and work for peace, freedom, and cooperation among the nations of the world.

I have read with interest the new scheme put forward in Travancore which is said to be on the American model. I am glad of the many progressive features in this scheme but it is not clear to me how far it is really on the American model for that model is based on individual liberty and power rests with the people. Travancore, although a progressive State in many ways, has suppressed individual liberty. I hope it will truly follow the American model and base itself on the will of the



people. As an immediate step, all constraints on the public activities of the individuals and of popular organisations should be removed.

## 28. Appeal to Princes to Restore Civil Liberties<sup>1</sup>

Soon after the publication of the declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on behalf of his brother princes, I expressed my appreciation of the new outlook and approach. It did not go far enough, according to my thinking, as the situation today demands a clear acceptance of the principle of responsible government. The real test remains how far the people are to exercise power and shape their own destiny. Nevertheless, I felt that the Princes had taken a notable step in laying down the fundamental rights of the people.

It is well known that in nearly all the States these rights are totally or largely lacking. Therefore, the first obvious step should be to give effect to them. Constitutional changes may take some little time, though even these should be hastened in view of the rapidly developing situation, but surely there is no excuse for delay in removing all obstructions in the way of the exercise of normal civil liberties.

Persons arrested and imprisoned for political reasons should be discharged, externment and internment orders withdrawn, full liberty of meeting in public or private and expression of opinion ensured and the right of association guaranteed.

In some States there is what is called a Registration of Societies Act,<sup>2</sup> which is used to prevent the formation or functioning of Praja Mandals and their association with other like organisations. This is obviously a gross infringement of the right of association. Again, in some States even printing was not permitted **without** permission. All these and many other restrictions are in direct **conflict** with the Chancellor's declaration and should be forthwith removed. I invite the rulers to take this action immediately. That will lay the foundation for cooperation. If there is delay, this will naturally lead people to think that the declaration is not seriously meant.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 26 January 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 27 January 1946.

2. It called for the sources of income of the Praja Mandals.

## 29. On the Deposition of the Maharaja of Rewa<sup>1</sup>

The deposition<sup>2</sup> of the Maharaja of Rewa by the Viceroy, in his capacity as the Crown Representative, is a significant development which throws light on the working of the Political Department.

It is stated that the Maharaja has recently committed several gross breaches of his undertaking to the Crown Representative. These are enumerated as follows: his declaration at the Dussehra darbar of his intention to confer responsible government on his people, his protest against the proposed departure of the Maharaj Kumar on a tour abroad, and his interference in this connection with the State administration by stirring up students and sending threatening communications to members of the council.

It is clear that the major offence is the Dussehra proclamation; everything else is a minor development. The Political Department usually functions in secret, and no one knows what pressure it brings on the rulers. There have been numerous cases of rulers who have misused their office and oppressed their people, and yet the Political Department has not intervened, or even when it intervened it was usually against the people. But when a ruler shows any progressive tendency, then the Political Department is eager enough to interfere. That appears to be the present case.

We are not concerned so much with individuals, but with the fundamental rights and progress of the people. Nobody seems to know as to who is responsible for basic constitutional changes in a State, the ruler or the Political Department. Where one ruler wants to move ahead the Political Department comes in the way. In Rewa, obviously, the Political Department alone is responsible and the Maharaja by his declaration has done a service to his people by making it clear that he aims at responsible government. The Political Department must now make good this declaration with all speed and thoroughness. Committees may achieve this or may delay or may produce some truncated scheme. In the circumstances that have been produced in Rewa no delay or partial scheme can be accepted.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 February 1946. *National Herald*, 2 February 1946.
2. On 30 January 1946, the Maharaja of Rewa was deposed as a sequel to alleged breaches of the conditions on which he had been allowed to return to the State after the enquiry against him in 1942. The conditions included an undertaking by the ruler that all State business would be initiated in the State Council.



If responsible government is coming to the State soon, then it is a curious beginning for the Political Department to function autocratically and without reference to the people. Further, I understand that meetings have been prohibited for a month. This is contrary to the recent declaration in favour of freedom of speech etc. made in the Chamber of Princes. That is a bad start for the people's freedom, and it leads one to suspect that the real freedom is not aimed at. However, the next few days or weeks will show the true picture of happenings in Rewa. The Political Department is on trial there, and the fact that the Maharaja has been deposed to satisfy the pique of that Department adds to its responsibility.

### 30. Arrests in Alwar State<sup>1</sup>

Two days ago news came of the sudden arrest of a number of prominent citizens and members of the Praja Mandal of Alwar State. On further enquiry I have received the following telegram:

Six office-bearers of the Alwar Praja Mandal including the President of the Municipality had been arrested previously. Seven more have now been arrested. Four of them are from the Alwar city, Shri Ram Avtar, advocate, and a nominated member of the State Law-Making Committee, Badri Prasad, advocate, Kunj Behari, editor of a local weekly and Inder Singh, two from Tejara town, Kripa Dayal, advocate and member of the Praja Mandal Working Committee and Shri Ghasiram, a municipal councillor; and one from Rajgarh town. In all 13 persons have so far been arrested.

The city observed two days' hartal and there were strikes and hartals in Rajgarh, Khadali, Khairthal, Harsauli, Mandhar and Laxmangarh. School boys and girls also took out *prabhat pheris* and processions and there were students' strikes. Mass meetings were held in towns and

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 6 February 1946. *National Herald*, 7 February 1946. Early in 1946, the Praja Mandal workers of Alwar State submitted to the State a scheme of constitutional reforms, which provided for a legislative assembly elected on adult franchise with full powers of legislation. The State authorities arrested the workers on 2 February 1946 for pressing their demand.

villages, protesting against the Government's action. This repression is despite the recent declaration of the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes.

I do not yet know why these developments have taken place, and I do not wish to express any final opinion without full knowledge. But this kind of thing is very disturbing and is bound to be resented. Coming as it does after the brave declaration made in the Chamber of Princes, it throws a warning light on the real state of affairs in some of the States. Will the Alwar Government explain?





## EXTERNAL PROBLEMS





## 1. Cable to Chiang Kai-shek<sup>1</sup>

I am greatly cheered by your cordial message which I have received with gratitude and happiness. During these years my thoughts have constantly been with China and you and Madame Chiang. I have sorrowed over China's trials and rejoiced at her courage and success. Earnestly trust that future will bring greater successes, unity and strength to China under your leadership. Reports of Madame Chiang's ill-health have distressed me. Hope she is in good health now. Sincere regards.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. This undated cable was sent in reply to Chiang's cable of 19 June 1945 in which he greeted Jawaharlal's release and stated: "My deep concern for you during the last few years has at last been eased." J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

## 2. Message to the United States<sup>1</sup>

I have received a large number of messages of greetings and good wishes from friends in India as well as America and England. I am sorry that owing to my constant travelling since release I am unable to acknowledge them. I have only been able to stop at my home, after nearly three years, for a night. I wish, therefore, to convey my deep gratitude to all friends and well-wishers for their messages which have moved me greatly.

Many friends in America have cabled to me suggesting that I should visit their country immediately and even to reach San Francisco before the United Nations conference ends.<sup>2</sup> I should love to go to America to meet friends and the many leading representatives of other

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 19 June 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 20 June 1945.
2. Delegates of 50 nations were in session at this time at San Francisco to draw up a charter for a world organisation. The three Indian official delegates were the nominees of the Government of India.



countries who are assembled there, but for the present, it is impossible to leave India. Also it is physically impossible to reach San Francisco before the conference ends.

I realise fully that the hope of the future lies in international understanding between free nations and in their mutual cooperation. I shall gladly do whatever I can and wherever I may be to further this. But for the present my duty lies in India and with my own people who have suffered much during these years and who are not yet out of this valley of shadows. I hope friends in America will understand and appreciate this. But whenever I can respond to their invitation, I shall gladly do so.

### **3. Message to Indians in South Africa<sup>1</sup>**

My greetings and good wishes to Indians in South Africa. I have followed with deep anxiety the troubles and racial barriers and disabilities imposed upon them.<sup>2</sup> Not knowing all the facts, I am unable to say much at this stage. But one can never accept anywhere in the world a status of inferiority. No Indian worthy of his country can thus demean himself and his motherland.

1. Given at Bombay, 21 June 1945. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22 June 1945.
2. Nearly 60 different laws had been enacted in South Africa restricting the liberty and the economic and social development of the 2,50,000 Indian settlers. The Pegging Act established separate areas for Indians, outside which they might neither reside nor occupy nor acquire ownership of landed property.

### **4. Good Wishes to R. Palme Dutt<sup>1</sup>**

Having just come out of prison after nearly three years and being hustled and harassed, I am hardly in a position to issue a message, but I

1. *The Leader*, 23 June 1945.

certainly wish Mr. Palme Dutt<sup>2</sup> every success in his election. I have known him for many years and have admired his ability. Apart from the personal factor, his success will obviously be of a certain symbolic value in the circumstances.

2. Rajani Palme Dutt (1896-1974); leader of Communist Party of Great Britain and editor of *Labour Monthly*; his publications include *World Politics* and *India Today*. He was contesting against Amery in the Sparkbrook constituency of Birmingham.

## 5. The Individual and the State<sup>1</sup>

I believe that an Indian national government would have averted such tragedies as the Bengal famine.

If some kind of a settlement had been reached following the Cripps talks, the people would have had not only a greater sensitiveness to the problems affecting them, especially the food problem, but also a greater efficiency and coordination in dealing with them. It is quite inconceivable that any other Government could have failed in 1943 so miserably as did the Bengal provincial Government and the Central Government. No big problem can be solved without full cooperation between the people and the Government. In 1943, instead of this cooperation there had been hostility and conflict.

Obviously, if a national government had been formed in 1942, there would have been a great deal of cooperation from the people and a constant desire to remove the cause of distress. I am quite convinced that under such circumstances the Bengal famine would have been either averted or greatly minimized.

One of the fundamental problems of the day everywhere is how to coordinate the two conceptions of the socialised organisation of society and state with the greatest amount of individual freedom.

I have no doubt that the new order will have very large elements of socialism as its basis. I hope, however, that individual freedom will be preserved to a large extent. I should like India to keep this in view

1. Interview to the Globe News Agency, Bombay, 24 June 1945; from *The Statesman*, 26 June 1945.



and to cooperate with all other nations to achieve such a world order. While developing international activities on an ever wider scale, India should not interfere with the individual genius and freedom of other people and countries.

Question: Can you suggest a formula for preserving peace after the war?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It will need the elimination, as far as possible, of political and economic conflicts between countries and an equitable rational order to organise international relations. It is essential that such an order should be based on the national freedom of the countries involved which should have no feeling of foreign domination and suppression.

Some kind of an international police force also seems to be necessary, but there is a grave danger of such a force being exploited by the dominant powers to their own advantage.

I think it would have been better, from every point of view, if a bigger status had been given to the small powers in any international settlement. Otherwise the small powers, in fear and self-defence, will align themselves with big powers and hostile blocs will emerge and face each other.

Since the British Labour Party represents various progressive groups, I wish it success in the election. Under its present leadership, however, the party means little to India.

It surprises me how the leaders of this party make references to India which show not only a colossal ignorance of this country but also an amazing insensitiveness to its dominant feelings. While I know that many individual leaders in Britain are sympathetic to India's hopes, the British people as a whole pay no attention to India except to give expression occasionally to platitudes. This applies to all the major political parties.

## 6. Message to China<sup>1</sup>

I followed from prison, as far as I could, the happenings in China during the dark days of 1943-44. We were all very unhappy and concerned

1. Interview given at Allahabad to the correspondent of the Central News Agency of China, 25 June 1945. From *The Leader*, 27 June 1945.

when the Japanese were advancing. But at that time I did not have the least doubt that China would beat back the invasion and be triumphant in the end. I am happy that this process is going on.

During those three years of enforced isolation, my mind was full of Indian problems in relation to those of the world. But not a day passed when I did not think of China and her very gallant struggle. Now that I am out of prison, I should like to send my greetings and good wishes to the Chinese and express my firm conviction that the friendship and cooperation of China and India are not only necessary for us but also for peace and freedom of the rest of the world.

I earnestly trust that the long agony of the Chinese, which began so many years ago, will soon end in victory, freedom and unity.

But I see nothing too bright for the immediate future of Asia though ultimately freedom and independence for the Asians are bound to come. The future of Asia will not obviously be a very unmixed affair for some time. The whole of South East Asia — that is, the parts occupied by Japan — will not settle down till the question of colonial domination is settled once for all. What happens to India will obviously have a big effect not only on South East Asia but also on western Asia.

I predict the gradual decline of British political influence in Asia and the growth of American economic influence. For a long time, Japan cannot play an effective role because of its defeat, but I don't see how it can be eliminated in the economic field.

San Francisco has not been a source of inspiration and optimism, though, undoubtedly, some effort has been made in the right direction. There is far too much covering up of essential problems of the day in the interest of this great power or that. The real question is not so much what conferences have done or not done, but the spirit behind them.

Only a world organisation, which fully recognises the need to stabilise the future on the basis of interdependence of free nations, of an economic order free from exploitation and of racial equality, will give the world peace and peaceful progress.

## 7. To S.H. Shen<sup>1</sup>

June 28, 1945

Dear Mr. Shen,

Thank you for your letter of June 26th. On my return from Bombay on the 25th I received a cable from the Generalissimo. I was very happy to receive his cordial and friendly message and I sent a reply to it

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

the next morning. Copies of these cables have been given by me to Mr. P.C. Chen for your information. For the present I am not thinking of sending any further message to the Generalissimo. In case I wish to do so I shall certainly take advantage of your kind offer.

In December 1942 I wrote a letter to Madame Chiang Kai-shek from Ahmadnagar Fort.<sup>2</sup> This letter was sent to the Government of India with the request that it might be forwarded to you, so that you might send it on to Madame Chiang. The Government, however, withheld the letter and informed me that it could not be sent. The original was kept by Government but I had a copy in my file. I am now enclosing a copy of this for your information. The letter is of course completely out-of-date but if you think it feasible, you might send it on.

My programme is entirely uncertain. It may be that I have to visit Delhi in the near future. If so, I shall be happy to meet you there.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 36-38.

## 8. China's Struggle<sup>1</sup>

Double seventh: What memories of eight terrible years of war and devastation, of horror and vast suffering of scores of millions and, at the same time, of magnificent courage and endurance of the people of China and of keeping alight the bright flame of resistance against all odds! I offer my homage to the people of China on this anniversary and express my firm faith in China's great destiny and my earnest hope and belief in the abiding friendship and cooperation of China and India in the future that is unfolding in Asia and the world.

1. Message given on the anniversary of Japanese aggression against China. *The Statesman*, 8 July 1945.



## 9. Continued Opposition to Nazism, Fascism and Militarism<sup>1</sup>

My opposition to Nazism and fascism has not undergone any change during the three years of my prison life.

Nazism and fascism are immensely dangerous to any country and to the world at large. I am as firmly opposed to them as ever before. The mere fact that the Nazis have disappeared from Germany does not affect one's reactions. Nazism may crop up again in any country, other than Germany, under some other name.

Question: What is your comment on Russian neutrality in the war against Japan?<sup>2</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: Fascism and Nazism have nothing to do with the war against Japan in the technical sense of the word. Japan is a militarist and aggressive nation. Her militarism and aggression have got to be checked.

As for the policies of various countries, they are no doubt the result of numerous factors. There is no question of one country entering a war of crusade for the sake of high principles, ignoring many other factors. It is presumptuous for me to judge Russia's or any other country's attitude. It is for them to decide. In spite of every sympathy for the so-called democratic countries, that is for England and France, when the war broke out America did not join it because of various internal factors till she was compelled to do so by the Japanese attack.

Q: If you want to check aggression and militarism you must launch super-aggression and super-militarism, and who is there to check the latter?

JN: Of course there is always the danger of a new militarism growing up in the act of suppressing an existing militarism. The only possible way of eliminating this is by the creation of an effective world organisation. It is difficult to say how far these efforts in this direction will succeed in the future.

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 11 July 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 July 1945.

2. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan only on 8 August 1945.

## 10. The Limits of Self-determination<sup>1</sup>

The Congress is strongly of the opinion that India should not be divided into units. The need of the hour, both for economic and defensive reasons, is that India should remain a united country. Small states in the world of tomorrow have no future as the present war shows. They are sure to be reduced to the status of satellite states like Iraq and Iran. The tendency of the big powers today is to form federations or confederations. India will be finished if it is divided. I stand for a south Asia federation of India, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Burma.

The main problem before us is the freedom of India. As soon as this problem is solved, the solution of other problems will follow. The Congress has acceded the right of self-determination for different nationalities. I do not want to force any unit to remain in a bigger India, but if any unit wants to remain aloof, then, within itself this unit shall have to give the same right of self-determination to other units which like to have it for themselves. The Congress has tried for a communal settlement during the last ten years, but each time the door has been banged against the Congress. Vested interests appear to stand for the *status quo*. If the other side does not want a communal settlement, what can the Congress do? I regret that under the cloak of religion, disruptive tendencies are being encouraged which will retard India's progress. The time has come when those who stand in our way and retard our progress towards the goal of freedom shall have to be removed.

If India were cut into parts its plight will be worse than even that of Iran and Iraq which are free in name only and are the happy hunting grounds for the great powers. Egypt<sup>2</sup> too is free in a strange fashion, that belligerents can fight on her soil while she looks on and is still called free. A divided India will face tremendous difficulties to develop and to exploit its great mineral and other resources.

We in India do not want freedom in name. In the world of tomorrow, smaller countries will have to federate into three or four big confederations, otherwise big countries will absorb them as satellites. There

1. Speech at Srinagar, 2 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 4 August and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 5 August 1945.
2. Egypt became an independent kingdom in 1922 but the British retained the responsibility for defence. The Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 ended the military occupation, but Britain retained the right to maintain military forces in the Suez Canal zone. During the Second World War, Egypt was the principal Allied base in West Asia and an Allied supply centre was located there.



will be no other course left open to the mother countries, who singly will not count for much. Barring Russia, there is no country in Europe which can call itself truly free. Not even England can call itself completely free. Although England fought bravely, its victory would have been impossible without the help of Russia and America. Men with foresight hope to find a solution to world problems by forging a world federation of free nations. As long as this is not established, wars will plague the world.

I would examine the question of self-determination in the light of big problems. Small countries do not have any independent status today. The old balance of power has been rudely disturbed and even Britain can become a satellite country and be reduced to the status of a client of some big country. If we honestly apply the principle of self-determination, we can find that India will become weak because of vivisection. Its development will be arrested.

The principle of self-determination looks very simple, but it creates hundreds of vastly intricate questions. It has caused a lot of ill-feeling, but if we try to look behind the veil, we find different sentiments which have no relation to self-determination. Many Hindus and Muslims are involved in it. Not a few among the upper and middle classes want to maintain the present conditions. So they give this question a communal or religious shape. There are many such people, both among Hindus and Muslims, who arouse communal feelings. They are not all angels living in India. But I am perfectly sure if India is divided, its fate will be worse than that of Iraq and Iran. Our country's development will be checkmated.

The man who places first things first and is not lost in the confusion of a hundred questions is a wise man. The first question for India is freedom with which is involved the vital problem of its stark poverty and hunger. We must solve this question of India's freedom first. The Congress during the last 25 years has waged a mighty struggle against the British Government. It fought and struggled and braved untold hardships and sufferings and it shook the Government at times. India is not yet free. But I am sure India is stronger for what has happened during the past three years, and its prestige in the world has gone higher.

Germany has been defeated, but there is no peace in Europe. Warfare is smouldering. Resistance movements are raising their heads. Nobody knows whether revolutions are likely to overtake the reoccupied countries as soon as the military administrations are withdrawn.

In the world of today there are two big powers, Russia and America. In the world of tomorrow, there will be two more, India and China —



there will be no fifth. Though our country is rich it makes one indignant to see the people terribly poor and naked. This state of affairs must end. The freedom of Kashmir, both political and economic, is bound up with that of India.

## 11. The Potsdam Conference<sup>1</sup>

The Potsdam decisions<sup>2</sup> in regard to Germany, though intended to ensure peace in Europe, are not likely to yield the desired result. German militarism had to be destroyed and the possibility of future aggression prevented. But it seems to me that the methods adopted will only lead to temporary and enforced peace behind which remain motives of revenge, and continuous attempts to break through the agricultural shell which is being made to encase Germany.

I will not expect a highly developed industrial people like the Germans to exist for long as a backward agricultural community, nor do I imagine that an economic equilibrium can be established in Europe on this basis.

Revenge and hatred can never be the foundation of a stable peace. I am afraid these proposals will be as temporary in their applications as the Treaty of Versailles. If militarism is to be destroyed, it is not enough to end it in Germany. This will simply mean a transfer of militarism and the aggressive spirit to other countries. Any partial and enforced solution can be no solution and will only lead to future conflicts.

At this moment the Big Three are deciding these vital issues. But it must be remembered that other countries are not necessarily in agreement with their decisions. Certainly India has neither been consulted nor has agreed to them. Though India's voice may be powerless today it will not be so in the future. I hope whatever influence India comes to possess will be used to evolve more stable conditions of world peace and freedom.

1. Interview to the press, Sopore, 4 August 1945. From *The Tribune*, 6 August 1945.

2. The U.S., Britain and the Soviet Union, meeting at Potsdam on 17 July-2 August 1945, decreed the extirpation of Nazism, the abolition of Nazi organisation and laws, the disbandment of German armed forces, the trial of war criminals, and democratisation and decentralisation of government.

It has been my long-held opinion that in Indian States there must be full responsible government. And of all the States, Kashmir is entitled to it at the earliest.

I pay tribute to the work of the Kashmir National Conference and its leader, Sheikh Abdullah. Its foundation is sound as its doors are open to all communities, for then alone can the Kashmiris build the edifice they aspire for. Unfortunately there are enough barriers which they face. Any organisation which creates new barriers and accentuates bitterness weakens the people.

Only selfish men, guided by the thought of temporary advantages, offer conditions for joining the freedom movement. This is merely a pretext for keeping themselves away from the hard path. Essentially they have no interest in freedom.

## 12. To Ali Motamedy<sup>1</sup>

Srinagar  
August 7, 1945

Dear Mr. Motamedy<sup>2</sup>,

I have received your letter<sup>3</sup> of the 26th July on my return to Srinagar. I am grateful for what you say about my books. As for your complaint, I am rather sorry that you should have come to any conclusion in regard to me on the basis of a very brief newspaper report of a long speech. I have been and am an admirer of Iran. What I pointed out was that small countries in Europe, America or Asia today have a very subordinate position in the international sphere and in the final sense of the word cannot be considered independent. Both politically and economically they tend to become satellites of big powers. I mentioned various countries of Europe. In fact I said that almost every country of Europe at present, barring two or three, was inevitably a satellite country. Similarly I said that various countries in Asia were in a like position and I mentioned among them Iran and Iraq. All this I thought was an objective description of the existing world situation. I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. At this time Consul-General for Iran in India.

3. He objected to Jawaharlal's references to his country in his speech of 2 August 1945 at Srinagar as "desultory and degrading remarks."

even went a step further and said that England, great power as she was, was gradually likely to be a satellite of America or a large group. India of course is not even a satellite but a dependent country, although potentially she has great resources.

I am writing to you in a hurry and cannot deal with the subject at length. But I hope even these few lines will correct your misapprehension and make you realise that I could not possibly say anything derogatory of Iran.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 13. Cable to Chiang Kai-shek<sup>1</sup>

16.8.45

I send you and the people of China my warmest congratulations on victory and the ending of war's eight years agony. May the unconquerable spirit of China which has triumphantly survived these terrible years rise in the future to endless greater heights and lend its great influence and weight to peace and freedom all over the world.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

### 14. The End of the World War<sup>1</sup>

Everybody must experience a feeling of relief at the end of war, and I am also happy that this carnage has ended. It is good that Nazism, fascism and Japanese militarism have suffered a defeat, but my happiness

1. Interview to the press, Srinagar, 16 August 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 August 1945.



would have been far greater if I could see militarism also eliminated from the world.

There are many ominous signs, not the least being the atomic bomb, which indicate the disastrous way that modern civilization is following. No sensitive individual can view this prospect without dismay.

My heart goes out specially to the people of China, who have suffered the longest agony of this war. I hope that, after eight and a quarter of years of struggle, they will find peace and unity and that their unconquerable spirit which kept them going, in spite of every terror and horror, will rise to even greater heights in the days to come.

#### 15. To Tan Yun-shan<sup>1</sup>

September 29, 1945

Dear Prof. Tan Yun-shan,  
I must apologise to you for the delay in acknowledging your previous letter with which you sent me a message from His Holiness Tai-hsu. I have been moving about most of the time and heavily occupied. I returned to Allahabad from Bombay only last night.

I appreciated greatly Abbot Tai-hsu's message and it brought to my mind his visit many years ago when we met in Benares. I hope you will convey to him, and through him to the China Buddhists' Association, our greetings and our earnest wish that friendly contacts between India and China should increase.

As you are going to China, I am glad to avail myself of the opportunity to send through you to the Chinese people our message of admiration for the fortitude and courage with which they faced terrible privations and trials during the past eight years and more. We are happy the war is over and success has crowned their efforts and we earnestly trust that the future will mean for them peace, unity and progress, as well as a close comradeship with the Indian people in the common tasks that face the world, and especially Asia.

To the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang I would beg you to convey my greeting and homage and my faith in China's future. Yesterday I read in the newspapers a report of a short speech delivered somewhere in Bombay by Mr. Sarat Bose. I was surprised and deeply pained at the attack he made on the Generalissimo. I can speak with authority in saying that this does not represent, and indeed is entirely opposed to,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

the Congress viewpoint as well as the feelings of the people in India generally. I am issuing a press statement on the subject.<sup>2</sup> You have no doubt seen the resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. in Bombay on China. I trust that friends in China will not be misled by Mr. Sarat Bose's remarks into thinking that he represents in this matter any considerable body of opinion.

With warm regards and good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See next item.

## 16. Rejoinder to Sarat Chandra Bose<sup>1</sup>

I have read with deep regret Mr. Sarat Bose's remarks about Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bose is perfectly entitled to his opinion about persons and things. But no one who occupies a responsible position in public life should make statements or accusations without full knowledge of facts. This applies all the more to expressions of opinion in regard to the internal affairs of other countries about whom our knowledge must necessarily be limited. Sarat Babu can hardly have had special sources of information during his long term in prison or detention. The last few years have brought China and India nearer to one another and there can be no doubt that this is largely due to the Generalissimo's and Madame Chiang's efforts in this direction. But, even apart from this, statesmen do not normally go out of their way to criticise and condemn the heads of friendly States. In this matter, I can say with confidence that Sarat Babu does not represent the Congress viewpoint. Only a few days ago, the A.I.C.C. passed a resolution<sup>3</sup> of greetings to the Chinese people and the Congress Presi-

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 September 1945. *The Hindu*, 1 October 1945.
2. In a speech on 26 September 1945, Sarat Bose criticised Chiang Kai-shek for not coming to terms with Mao Tse-tung and described him as the "grand fascist of the East."
3. On 21 September 1945, the Congress Working Committee declared that "the people of China, who have faced unflinchingly and with heroic steadfastness and courage over eight years of horrible war and disaster, would rise to even greater heights in the years of peace."

dent, and I have, since our release, conveyed to the Generalissimo messages of goodwill on behalf of the Congress. To these he has responded in cordial terms.

Any person who has some knowledge of events knows that during the past three and a half years, the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang have gone out of their way to help<sup>4</sup> India's cause even at the cost of some temporary injury to their own national interests, or rather, it would be more correct to say, because they considered India's freedom to be in the interests of Chinese and Asiatic freedom. When India knows all the facts, she will, I am sure, be grateful to China, and especially to the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang. To call the Generalissimo a fascist is a manifest absurdity in view of all that has happened during the past eight years or more.

When foreigners criticise us in India, we resent their criticism because it is usually ill-informed and sometimes it just flows from dislike. We must not fall into this error ourselves, not only because it is wrong in itself but also because it has unfortunate consequences and sows the seeds of illwill between nations and peoples. The future of Asia depends on the goodwill and neighbourly relations between Asiatic countries and, of these, China and India must obviously play a dominant role. I am not competent enough, nor is it my business to discuss China's internal problems which are as difficult and intricate as India's are, but from my general knowledge of the situation, I am convinced that these problems will be solved and China will make rapid progress as a united democratic State.

4. Chiang Kai-shek had protested against the arrest of Congress leaders and asked President Roosevelt to intervene.

## 17. The Use of Indian Troops in Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

Only a few days ago, the All India Congress Committee declared that Indian troops must not be used for keeping down the peoples of colonial

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 30 September 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 1 October 1945.



territories in Indonesia and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> And now, almost immediately after, has come the news of the independence movements taking active and aggressive shape in Indo-China and Java and of Indian troops being employed to suppress them.

The use of Indian troops is being greatly resented in India and the British Government should know that it is likely to lead to grave and far-reaching consequences.

The Indian national movement as represented by the Congress has had friendly contacts in the past, long before the last war began, with the national independence movements of Java and Indo-China. We are intensely interested in the freedom of these as well as other subject countries of Asia and Africa and we would like to help them in so far as we can to achieve this.

It is monstrous that our people and our armed forces should be employed to suppress those for whom we have the fullest sympathy.

2. In Indo-China, the British were keeping down the agitation of the Annamite nationals with the help of a contingent of 12,000 Indian troops and in Indonesia they were employing the Indian army to help the Dutch restore their control.

## 18. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad

1 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

... You would have noticed in the press a totally unnecessary controversy between Sarat Bose and me. I am afraid Sarat has for some reason or other got a grievance against me, though why it should persist I do not know. He is making a dead set against Chiang Kai-shek, which seems to me bad and harmful and likely to create unnecessary trouble all round. None of us admires all that Chiang Kai-shek has done. But it does seem to me wrong for us to attack him in this way. He happens to be the head of the Chinese State and so far as India is concerned his attitude has always been very friendly. For my part I have kept up friendly relations not only with Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Government but with many of his critics in China. I do not want this controversy with Sarat, but to remain silent became impossible for me.

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 2. p. 3. Extracts.

I am going to Lucknow on the 3rd for our provincial Congress meetings which will keep me there for 5 days. From 12 to 17 October I tour some districts in the U.P.—Ballia, Ghazipur, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Benares which suffered most during the past three years. I come back on the 17th and on the 18th I leave for Delhi, spending a day there in connection with I.N.A. work and proceed to Jaipur for three days. I expect to return to Allahabad on the 25th. I have to be in Bombay on 6 November for the National Planning Committee. Before I go there I should like to pay a brief visit to Calcutta and Midnapore if I can manage it.

I hope Bapu and you are keeping well.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

#### 19. To N.A.F. Meemanage<sup>1</sup>

1.10.45

Dear friend,<sup>2</sup>

I have your letter and your telegram.<sup>3</sup> I gladly write to you what my ideas are about the future of Lanka and India. During the last fourteen years or so, ever since my visit to Lanka in the summer of 1931, I have often thought of this subject. That visit and a subsequent visit, as well as my reading of history and current events, brought home to me the fact that Lanka and India are so closely connected that they must inevitably be associated with each other politically and otherwise in the future. For India, perhaps, this is not such an important matter, as India minus Lanka will yet be a great power. But for Lanka, this connection is vital. This has been my faith all these years, but I have always made it clear that this question of closer association must be decided by Lanka herself and she must feel perfectly free to choose.

Culturally, racially and linguistically Lanka is as much part of India as any province. But all these considerations might be overridden by political and economic considerations that point inevitably to a closer union. Lanka's trade must of necessity be largely with India; any attempt to look elsewhere will produce instability and insecurity.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. President at this time of the Ceylonese Union in Mysore State.

3. He had asked Jawaharlal for a message to the youth of Sri Lanka.



Politically, India is certain to be a free and independent country soon, and will thereafter rapidly develop industrially and otherwise. She is likely to become the centre for defence purposes and trade for Southern and South East Asia. It is my hope that regional agreements, within the four corners of a world agreement, will bind together all these countries of South and South East Asia.

If some such development takes place, Lanka must hold on to this grouping, presumably as an autonomous unit of the Indian federation. In any event, the country cannot remain isolated and stand by herself in the modern world. She must be associated with some larger group. What group can that be except the Indian federation? Association with England is not likely to be profitable, feasible or desirable. Besides, the British empire is a fading institution.

Admission into the Indian federation should not limit Lanka's freedom except in regard to certain minimum federal subjects, such as defence. I am in favour of having a compulsory minimum of federal subjects, as well as, in addition, optional federal subjects. This would enable some of the federating units to have a closer hand and a more centralised government, and at the same time give greater freedom to some units. The choice should be that of the unit.

While I regret the existing tension between India and Lanka I do not attach great importance to it and consider it rather superficial. It is due to faults on both sides and a narrowness of outlook which forgets tomorrow and concentrates on today. I think Indians in Lanka, or some of them, have shown little wisdom in demanding special safeguards for their interests and special representation.<sup>4</sup> They had no business to make any reservations or qualifications to their support of full freedom for Lanka. I think also that certain leaders in Lanka have not acted wisely in denying Indian residents certain fundamental rights and in treating them as less than citizens.<sup>5</sup> It is obvious that India can never accept any position for her children anywhere which is not that of perfect equality. At the same time I am opposed to any kind of exploitation of Lanka and her people by Indian business. The first consideration must always be the good of the people.

4. The leaders of the Indian community in Ceylon at this time supported a scheme of "balanced representation" which would establish parity in the legislature and the executive between the Sinhalese who formed two-thirds of the population and the minority communities.

5. The Village Tribunals Ordinance of 1942 sought to bring the Indian estate labourers under the jurisdiction of village tribunals, although they were denied the village committee franchise in village areas.



It is for the younger generation in India and Lanka to get over these petty squabbles and view the future in proper perspective. The only picture that the future can show is that of a closer union between the two, and the people of the two countries cooperating together in the great tasks ahead.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 20. Second Rejoinder to Sarat Bose<sup>1</sup>

I regret that Mr. Sarat Bose has started a controversy. It is none of my seeking. Evidently, he is displeased with me for such part as I may have played in formulating Congress policy in the past, and thinks that I should be prevented from further misleading the country. That is a perfectly legitimate ambition and I have nothing to say about it. Indeed, as an individual I can well be left out of the picture. What is important is the present policy of the Congress, and I would suggest to Sarat Babu to consult the Congress President or the Working Committee in regard to it.

It is not my business to defend the policies or the activities of the Chinese Government. Nor do I think myself competent to judge a situation which, after many years of horrible and devastating war, created vast and intricate problems. But Sarat Babu attacked the head of that Government and made him responsible for the ills China suffers from. That surely was extraordinarily unfair and unwise and totally uncalled for. Sarat Babu's references to the closed door conversations with men like Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek or Colonel Louis Johnson and his further mention of the Asiatic federation leave me somewhat bewildered. What exactly does he object to, unless it is just my humble self? That is attaching too much importance to an individual in considering national policies. May I inform Sarat Babu that I have the honour and privilege of considering Madame Sun Yat-sen as one of my esteemed friends? May I also suggest to him that phrases like cheap and false international claptrap do not help in any argument or in elucidating any problem.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 October 1945. *The Hindu*, 3 October 1945.

## 21. Help to Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

I should like to tell Dr. Sukarno<sup>2</sup> that if I can be of any service to the cause of Indonesian freedom, I shall gladly visit Java in spite of urgent and important work in India.<sup>3</sup>

I believe that our freedom in India or Java or elsewhere hangs together and if I can serve the cause of freedom in Java now better than in India, I shall certainly go there. But that depends not so much on my wishes, but on the facilities for leaving India and travelling to Batavia by air. If these facilities are available, I shall set aside all other work and go there. Meanwhile, I send my greetings to Dr. Sukarno and to my old comrades, Dr. Mohammad Hatta and Dr. Sharir<sup>4</sup>, and wish them all success in achieving the independence of Indonesia.

1. Interview to the press, Lucknow, 9 October 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 10 October 1945.
2. (1901-1970); founded the 'Partai Nasional Indonesia' in 1927; was imprisoned for four years in 1929; became the leader of the intellectual faction on the split of the party in 1932; banished from Java by the government, but returned from exile after the Japanese invasion in 1942 and took part in the formation of the nationalist organisation, the Central People's Power. On 17 August 1945, with Japanese cooperation, established the Republic of Indonesia, became its first President, and continued in that office until 1967.
3. On 7 October 1945, Dr. Sukarno invited the "four leaders of freedom" namely, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Jawaharlal, Dr. Evatt, the Foreign Minister of Australia, and Brigadier-General Romulo, of the Philippines, to visit Indonesia and see for themselves the conditions prevailing there.
4. Dr. Sultan Sharir, then Prime Minister of Indonesia.

## 22. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
9 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just received your letter of 6 October.<sup>2</sup> I am sorry for the delay in sending the election manifesto for the Central Assembly. I could not

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 2, pp. 5-6.
2. In this letter, Vallabhbhai Patel had suggested that Jawaharlal draft an election manifesto. He also referred to the controversy between Sarit Bose and Jawaharlal and to Communist propaganda against the Congress.

possibly find time in Lucknow. I hope to send you something tomorrow.

I quite agree with you as to Dharam Yash Dev.<sup>3</sup>

I am really at a loss to understand why Sarat Bose suddenly launched an attack on me unless this is due to some old grievance which I have forgotten. It seems obvious to me that his anger is directed more against me than Chiang Kai-shek.

You may have seen in the papers the invitation issued by Dr. Sukarno, the President of the Provisional Indonesian Republic. Among others, this has been issued to me to visit Java immediately to see things there. The situation there is odd and rather critical. It will have its repercussion elsewhere. I felt that some immediate response was desirable, and so I replied that if there is need for me there in the interest of Indonesian freedom I shall come there, even though this means leaving urgent and important work here; of course this depends on passport and travelling facilities. By air Batavia can be reached in two days from Allahabad. There is hardly any chance of my getting facilities from Government here. Nevertheless I am applying for them.

There is just a chance of my going to Calcutta and Midnapore towards the end of this month for four days or so. Someone told me that you might be there then with Bapu.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

3. Dharam Yash Dev was the publicity secretary of the Congress election board. Vallabhbhai Patel had written that he had an expensive style of living and an ordinary salary would not suit him.

## 23. Japan's New Role in Asia<sup>1</sup>

I am asked by Japanese newspapers to give plain advice to Japan, especially as to what I think Japan should do to regain the respect and confidence of other nations. That is not easy for me for it is always difficult and often presumptuous to advise other nations and peoples and it becomes still more difficult to advise a people who are stricken down

1. Undated message to Japanese newspapers. *The Hindu*, 11 October 1945.



by defeat and misfortune, howsoever deserved these might be. Also I cannot speak for the United Nations as a whole or for the four Big Powers who dominate the counsels of these nations. Perhaps I can have some insight into the mind of India and to a lesser extent into the mind of Asia and so I shall say a few words as an Indian.

There was a time when Indians looked up to the Japanese and admired their great achievements. Then there came a time when the Japanese began to resemble too closely the aggressive imperialist powers of the West and instead of being champions of Asiatic freedom, their lust for domination and imperialist expansion led them to the conquest of Asiatic countries. Korea was deprived of her freedom and China, in the birth pangs of new freedom, was continually harassed and threatened and later attacked. All this changed India's attitude to Japan and the old admiration gave place to resentment. Our sympathies flowed to China and other countries attacked by Japan.

Now Japan has met with disaster in her imperialist adventures, a fate which will befall every nation today which aims at world dominion. Both world considerations and narrow national interests must induce Japan to give up her old dreams of conquest and expansion. Nor should she think in terms of revenge, for there is no end to the cycle of hatred and revenge. The Japanese have shown extraordinary qualities, which were turned in the wrong direction. They must now use them to build anew on a sounder foundation; they must reject militarism and imperialism and make Japan a country of free democratic institutions which threatens none and is feared by none. They must build their economic order on the basis of equality and equal opportunities for all their people and not aim at economic domination of any other country. Thus they will create afresh a prosperous and progressive Japan on friendly terms with her neighbours, and as a member of the Asiatic family as well as the world brotherhood of nations. Japan has caused deep injury to China, both material and spiritual, and therefore Japan's special task must be to gain the goodwill of the Chinese people. Ultimately the peace of the Far East depends on the cooperation of the Chinese and the Japanese and such cooperation can only be based on freedom. If this policy is followed by Japan she will not only gradually heal the deep scar of war, but will also cure the deeper spiritual injuries caused to herself and to others and bridge the gulf which now separates her from other nations. India and other countries of Asia will outlive yesterday's anger and resentment and join hands with Japan in furtherance of Asiatic freedom and cooperation within the larger framework of world peace.

## 24. Solidarity with Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

On my return from my brief, but very full and exhilarating, tour of some of the eastern districts of the United Provinces, my first thought is of the gallant struggle for freedom that is being waged in Indonesia that has reached a critical stage.<sup>2</sup> All of us in India have expressed our wholehearted sympathy with the Indonesian peoples and the new government they have formed. That is a welcome sign of our solidarity, but I hope we shall not leave it at that, for big issues are involved in this Indonesian struggle. We must watch and help wherever we can; especially we must insist that no Indian troops be used against the Indonesian Republican Government, and that no material for war should be sent from India to help the Dutch Government. Australian, Chinese and other seamen have refused to load war material meant for the suppression of the Indonesian Republic.<sup>3</sup> That example of solidarity and effective action should be followed in India. It is for the Congress committees and the trade union movement to take steps in this direction, for it must always be remembered that Indonesian freedom is vitally important to India and Asia.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 15 October 1945. *The Hindu*, 17 October 1945.
2. On 12 October 1945, the Annamites suffered a large number of casualties in Saigon in an engagement with a detachment of Gurkhas.
3. On 25 September 1945, there were large-scale dockyard strikes in Australia in sympathy with the Indonesian nationalist movement.

## 25. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
16 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter<sup>2</sup> of the 12th. I returned yesterday from my visit to Ballia etc. very tired. On the 18th I am off again. I shall be visiting Ajmer from Jaipur.

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 13.
2. Vallabhbhai Patel had commended Jawaharlal's proposal to visit Indonesia and opposed a suggestion for a settlement with the Hindu Mahasabha.

Prafulla Babu has telegraphed to me to postpone my visit to Calcutta. So this is not fixed yet. I still want to go there, especially to Midnapore, if Prafulla Babu agrees. He wants me to go on a longer visit later. But no one knows what will happen later.

The Indonesian struggle is becoming more intense and critical and I feel that we ought to give it greater prominence. It would be a good thing if there were meetings etc. But the most dramatic thing would be for our dock workers and seamen to refuse to load war material for Java, as the Australians did.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

**26. To Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>**

Aliahabad  
16.10.45

My dear Maulana,

I enclose a letter from Asaf Ali. Yesterday I sent a telegram to you suggesting that you might issue a further statement about Indonesia. In Australia and elsewhere dock workers and seamen have refused to load arms and war material which was intended for use by the Dutch in Indonesia. It would be a good thing if our workers and seamen did likewise. The situation is critical and we should help in every way we can. I think meetings should also be held.

There is one other aspect of the question. It appears from the reports that Gurkha troops have been used against Indonesians. Would it not be desirable for an appeal to be made to the Nepal Government to prevent this improper use of their people?

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.



## 27. The Obligation of the United States<sup>1</sup>

While welcoming President Truman's declaration<sup>2</sup> of United States foreign policy, I may state that unless some effective solution to the Indian problem is found within the next few months, a new crisis will develop in India, which cannot be solved by parleys at the high level. This crisis will affect the world situation.

It is well known that America has been looked up to for many years as a country which stands for freedom. There are undoubtedly other powerful forces at work in America also but, as compared with other great powers, America is free from the burden of an imperialist past. This is a great asset to America in its dealings with other countries. Mr. Wendell Wilkie mentioned this after his world tour.

Everywhere in Asia and Africa people looked up to America, but even then certain doubts were beginning to arise because of American policy. Subsequently, these doubts gained strength. President Truman's announcement will help to some extent in lessening these doubts, but obviously mere announcements do not go far at a time when active interpretation of policy is needed everywhere.

There is no doubt that, during the last few years, there has been some disillusionment in India in regard to American championship of freedom. At San Francisco, the Soviet Union took the lead in championing independence for subject countries, but other powers fought shy of this and tried their utmost to tone it down.<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet Union has been usually silent about all such matters, but whenever they have said anything it has been in favour of freedom of subject countries.

At the present moment we are right in the midst of the aftermath of the war and inevitably all the assurances given and the promises

1. Interview to the press, Lucknow, 28 October 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, October 29 1945.
2. President Truman's statement of 27 October 1945 insisted on the right of all peoples to self-government, territorial changes only in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned, and the advantages of equal access to trade and raw materials and international economic collaboration.
3. Speaking at the San Francisco Conference on 30 April 1945, M. Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, said: "We have here among us an Indian delegation, although we know India is not an independent country. But the time will come when the voice of independent India will be heard too. We complied, however, with the request by the British Government that India should be invited to this conference, imperfect though her status is."

made during the war demand fulfilment. Yet we see the attempt to crush with armed forces the freedom movements of Indonesia and Indo-China, and in this British forces are taking an effective part. Indeed, even the Japanese have been employed for this purpose. The American Government has declared that lend-lease<sup>4</sup> goods used against the Indonesians should have their labels torn off. That is poor consolation, indeed, for the Indonesians. They will be shot down by guns whether the guns bear this label or that.

In India, the United States has kept itself clear from all entanglements. We cannot blame it for this attitude, specially in wartime, but there has been something much more than this during the past few years—a passive and sometimes even an active support of British policy and British propaganda. We realise fully that Indian freedom will be won by India's strength and that we cannot rely on any foreign power. Nevertheless, it is obvious that India's reactions to other powers will be governed by their policy to India. It should be clear to anyone that India will function independently before very long and that an independent India will make rapid progress and play an important role in world events. That role will be influenced by the attitude of other powers to Indian freedom.

So far as one can judge, American policy in regard to India has been strangely subservient to British policy. That British policy, whatever the professions behind it, continues to be one of authoritarian rule in India without the least trace of democratic functioning. I trust that President Truman's announcement indicates something more than an expression of vague goodwill. Today, effective action is necessary if we are to save ourselves from the rapid deterioration leading ultimately to conflicts on a vast scale.

In India, besides various problems, a possible new constitution is being discussed, but the reality is not this legal consideration or even the elections that are to come, but an intense and passionate desire to be rid of British rule and to establish a free and democratic state. During the four months I have been out of prison, I have been astonished at the depth of this sentiment and the rising national feeling of the people.

In effect the problem of freedom is indivisible. It crops up separately whether in Java or whether in Indo-China or India or elsewhere. But basically it is the same. There must be, therefore, a common approach to a common solution before all peaceful solutions are ruled out.

4. The system under which essential war materials were made available to the Allied countries by the U.S. in the Second World War.



## 28. India's Lead in Asian Liberation<sup>1</sup>

The fight for India's freedom is interlocked with the liberation movement of other Asiatic countries, which are determined to achieve independence.

I am proud to declare that India is the torch-bearer in the liberation movement of Asiatic countries, which look up to India for assistance and guidance. I regret that India is not strong enough to prevent Indian troops from crushing the spirit of independence of the people of Indonesia and Indo-China.

However, I warn the British Government of the growing feeling of resentment in the country against the use of Indian troops in Indonesia. The British Government's intervention in the internal affairs of Indonesia is not justified. In my opinion, the British Government is afraid that if the liberation movement succeeds in Indonesia, it will have repercussions in India also.

I urge the King of Nepal to force the British Government not to use Gurkha troops against Indonesians. The United States Government, which is always professing to be the champion of freedom and democracy, has failed to take active interest in Indonesian affairs.

Three years of ruthless repression by an alien and irresponsible government has sown seeds of distrust, frustration and anger. The country's temperature is rising every day and I feel that if an early solution is not found, people's energy might be directed into dangerous channels.

Surrounded by "yesmen", a handful of officers in London and Delhi, who profess to be masters of India's destiny, are living in the realm of fantasy. They refuse to face the realities of the situation. I ask, what good has the present Government done and what good is it capable of doing? Time has come when we cannot be treated like dumb-driven cattle.

I am not prepared to hear oft-repeated sermons from Delhi and London that we are not united. They have not felt the pulse of the people. They only know how to execute unreal plans and schemes. Sometimes they hear an angry voice and say that they do not like it, not knowing that the voice is that of millions of Indians joining to shatter the chains of slavery. The day is not far off when our voice will be heard in every nook and corner of the world.

1. Address at South East Asia Day meeting, Lucknow, 28 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 29 October 1945.



India is reeling under an authoritarian government, both at the Centre and in the provinces. The present Labour Government in Britain, while professing to sympathise with our aspirations, argue that our demand is not the real issue. They, in effect, do not understand the importance of the Indian problem. India is the key to the solution of the question of freedom of all dependent countries.

Some have complained that Congress leaders are saying some harsh things which the Government do not like, for instance, about conditions in Delhi and Lahore forts. It is not for me to compare these forts to the notorious Belsen Camp, once run by the Nazis. But let the Government hold a sifting inquiry into the allegation against British officers for what they did in Ballia and Azamgarh in the past three years.

I warn the British Government that if it does not pay heed to the legitimate aspirations of the Indian people, a day may come when Asia will rise against Britain and America. Henceforth, Indians will refuse to lead a life of slavery and disgrace.

## 29. A Test for the United Nations<sup>1</sup>

The Indonesian struggle is today the most vital aspect of the Asian problem and is, therefore, a world problem. It is the symbol of revolt against imperialist domination. It is the acid test of the professions made by the United Nations in the course of the war, of the four freedoms of the San Francisco Charter and of so much that has been said in regard to democracy and freedom.

I appreciate Dr. Mohamed Hatta's friendly reference to me.<sup>2</sup> We are very old friends and on my part it will be a great pleasure to meet him and his colleagues again. What part I can play in Indonesia at

1. Interview to the press, Lucknow, 17 November 1945. From *The Leader*, 18 November 1945.

2. Mohamed Hatta said on 16 November 1945: "I met Pandit Nehru in 1927 at a conference of the anti-colonial league in Brussels. We have been good friends through the years, and we, who have been fighting for Indonesian independence, know him as the doughty champion and are well aware of his work on the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism and the fight for national independence."

present I cannot say, but certainly I would do my best to get the problem solved in a peaceful way on the basis of Indonesian independence. At present, in India I am heavily occupied with important engagements, but, as I said before, I am prepared to forego all these engagements if I am permitted to go to Java.

India is deeply moved by the horrors that are being perpetrated in Indonesia and our own freedom struggle is being powerfully influenced.

For my part, I am prepared to go to Java at any time and at a moment's notice. For the present, permission has been refused to me and I cannot go. But my mind and heart are full of what is happening there and I believe that a time will come when the people of India will play a more effective role in ensuring the independence of Indonesia, as well as of other countries in Asia.

Many of us were doubtful of the professions of the United Nations when they were made, but few realised how they would be belied and betrayed so soon after the war. A more flagrant example can hardly be imagined. Here is a nation undoubtedly united in its demand for independence, undoubtedly capable of not only holding its own but of gaining freedom from the Dutch alone, and now we have British armies using all their armed might to suppress Indonesia in order to reestablish the Dutch empire. Even their erstwhile enemies, the Japanese, are utilised against the Indonesians. Most shameful of all for us is the use of Indian troops.

I am glad that the workers and seamen in India are beginning to realise their responsibility and refusing to load ships carrying war material from India to Java.

It is time that the people of Europe and America realise the vital significance of the Indonesian struggle for independence and the far-reaching consequences involved. Not even the atom bomb is going to stop these consequences.

### 30. To Subrata Roy Chowdhury<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
December 3, 1945

Dear Mr. Chowdhury,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 25th October. To read through the programme of the Cambridge Majlis reminds me of the old times when

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Subrata Roy Chowdhury, at that time president of the Cambridge University Majlis, wrote that the Majlis had planned to demand India's independence.

I was a member of the Majlis. We have progressed since then both in India and abroad where Indians foregather. I am glad to learn that you are trying to enlighten public opinion in England. It is a big task.

I hope the Majlis keep up contacts with other Asian students in Cambridge. (You know I use the word "Asian" not "Asiatic".) It is very necessary that Indian students especially should develop these contacts with people not only from Asia but countries like Egypt and North Africa etc.

With all good wishes to you and to the Majlis.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 31. Civil War in China<sup>1</sup>

Question: What is your reaction to the present situation in China?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is an extremely unfortunate and unhappy situation that there should be any kind of civil conflict in China which will come in the way of China's development after the stress of war. China has been recognised as one of the major powers of the world, but if China's attention and energy are spent in internal conflicts then its influence in Asian and world affairs will necessarily be less, and more particularly in its own development which is very necessary for it. Possibly every person who has an attraction for China or interest in its people must desire an end of all such conflicts.

Q: Can you suggest some way for unity in China?

JN: It is difficult for me to suggest ways and means in detail, but it will obviously be exceedingly unfortunate if there is any division in China. China must retain unity, and that unity should necessarily be built on a democratic basis. That is the main thing. The details are difficult for me, myself being outside the country, to suggest.

1. Interview to the press, Santiniketan, 23 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 December 1945.



Q: Do you think that China is emerging as a democratic country after the war?

JN: It is a question which does not concern China alone. In all such situations international developments and other great powers influence the events.

Q: Are you likely to visit China?

JN: I should certainly like to go to China, but not in the near future. After all a visit to China does not take a long time. When there will be a free India, I should very much like the development of closer contacts with China, cultural and political, besides contacts of every kind of trade and commerce. I should also like closer contacts to be developed among Asians.

Q: In what ways would you like to develop closer contacts with China?

JN: After India is free, enormous avenues will open out for all manner of contacts, political, economic, trade, cultural etc. At the present moment such contacts, to a large extent, are limited because they are controlled by the two Governments. On this side the Government of India is not very keen on contacts. When the Government changes, obviously India should have close contacts and understanding and possibly alliances for various purposes.

Q: Do you think that the present visit of the M.P.s delegation to India will in any way help India towards attaining Swaraj?

JN: We are always willing to discuss things with everyone who may like to come here. I do not know what the delegation intends to do. I do not know many of the members of this delegation. Obviously, the issue of Swaraj is not to be settled by a delegation of this type. There is, however, always one aspect of it, that is, it is always desirable to have personal contacts. It thaws a situation. In this sense it is good. But I do not know whether it will lead to one thing or the other. We shall certainly meet the members of the delegation.

Q: What about your proposed visit to Java?

JN: I want to go, but I can only go when I get travel facilities. I have applied to the Government of India, but I have not yet got any reply.

Q: Will the Congress participation in the election in any way help in attaining Swaraj?

JN: Election by itself does not give it. But the election affords an opportunity to go to the masses and helps us to consult their opinion. There are other factors that are essential to achieve independence.

### 32. Bonds between India and China<sup>1</sup>

It was, I think, eight and a half years ago that Prof. Tan Yun-shan asked me to come here to open the China Bhavan. I agreed gladly, but a very unusual thing happened on the day of my starting. I was unable to come and I sent a message. Later I came to Santiniketan and visited the China Bhavan with the illustrious leader of China, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. I am happy here today to participate in the meeting of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society. I have listened with attention and pleasure to the reports and activities of the society, and yet I feel that much more can be done in this respect if we take into consideration not only the numerous bonds of contact between India and China, but also the vastness of the two countries. I am anxious to develop all manner of contacts, cultural and others, between the two countries. And we, the people of India and China, should like to develop this intensively and extensively. I should like to see branches of this society in other places in India and in China, so that it may not be confined to a few specialists who take interest in the relations of the two countries, but to a large number of Indians and Chinese. Perhaps the conditions created by the war during the last five or six years have come in the way of developing the branches of the society in India. Yet the great war recently brought India and China nearer and closer — physically nearer as the centre of activities of China has come nearer to India by the development of communication of road and of air. Today it is possible to be in China after a brief day's journey. All these factors, which may have taken place in due course, but which

1. Address to the Sino-Indian Cultural Society, Santiniketan, 23 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25 December and *National Herald*, 25 December 1945.

have been expedited by the war, have led to a closer association and approximation between China and India. Possibly they have far greater effect in the public mind — even as the activities of our small society of experts, who do real service by canalising these feelings and by providing data for others.

It seems to me that in the future, India and China will necessarily come nearer to each other. I am not for a moment thinking of a mere continuation of the ancient bonds though, of course, they will be there, but perhaps of a more objective view not coloured by sentiments and desires. Viewing the world situation as it seems to develop in spite of its many contradictions it seems to me inevitable that China, India and probably some other countries of Asia, evidently of South East Asia, will have to stand together, and cooperate together in matters not only cultural but economic as well. They will have easy access to each other and they will look to each other to resist Western aggression by mutual contact and agreement. Possibly this may take some time though the tempo of the world structure is greatly rising and the world is changing very rapidly in these days.

The great war has just ended, but now we see signs of trouble and conflict all over the world even among the victorious nations. There are already dark hints of another war on a more extensive scale. I cannot say whether it is likely to break out but nobody can ignore the threat of such a war. We should put our own house in order before it materialises. India and China, which might have played a different part in world affairs, are in some kind of a turmoil today. In China, it has taken the obvious course of a civil war. In India the trouble is more deep-seated though it is not obvious. In either country deep differences among people weaken the power of influencing the affairs of the world. This is unfortunate.

We in India should have the privilege of playing an important part in the development of the world situation. Instead, we have to watch things happening, which are not only injurious to our interests but are hateful sometimes, as the events in South East Asia are today. All manner of developments are taking place, sometimes in the name of India, which have no relation to Indian interests.

China today is undoubtedly one of the principal powers of the world. Many eastern countries look with hope to China for a lead in Asian affairs. Many western countries look to China to play a vital and tremendous part in peace as she has done during the last eight years in war. That is why it is a matter of deep anguish to many of us to see the internal trouble and conflict in China at the present moment.



You have rightly passed a resolution congratulating China on her victorious emergence after passing through an ordeal during these eight years, which is something difficult for us even to imagine. The sufferings which the Chinese underwent and the heroic courage which they showed are unparalleled. It is right we should congratulate them, and it is right that we should send our good wishes to the great leaders of the Chinese people, especially to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. I do not think that even in the midst of civil war there is any person who challenges the right of the Generalissimo to be the leader of China. Even his critics have to acknowledge that he is the only possible leader in the present circumstances who can lead China out of chaos. It is most fitting, therefore, that you have passed a resolution congratulating him.

We hope that the present state of affairs in India and China will end and both countries will come closer in their friendship, not only for their mutual advantage, but also for the good of the world at large.

It may be that the various countries succeed in producing a more harmonious whole, a better equilibrium in the world. However that may be, I am dead certain that there is going to be no equilibrium in this world unless there is equilibrium in Asia, India, China and in South East Asia. There is not going to be any harmony or peace in this world even for a short time, much less for a long time, unless the problems of Asia are settled satisfactorily, unless the aggression and interference of western countries in Asian affairs end. It may be that the tremendous power that has been unleashed by the discovery of the atomic bomb may increase the physical might of some nations. It may be that success in the last war has made some nations feel that they face no obstacle to do what they choose with the rest of the world. But if they feel like that they will soon find that they are under a delusion. It is difficult to imagine what the atom bomb or other applications of the atomic energy will do in future. I should say that it may change the shape of the world. But whatever the atomic energy might or might not do, even this mighty source of power is not going to enable the countries who possess it to impose their will on the countries of Asia. Obviously those who desire world peace should know once for all that there can be no world peace, no equilibrium or stability in the East and in the West, unless aggression, domination, imperialism, and interference in the affairs of other countries end completely. This is the lesson which the East still has to teach to the West, which India and China, which have played no aggressive role for the last 200 or 300 years, have to teach and which the Sino-Indian Cultural Society has to teach so that it might live upto to its lofty ideals.

33. To H.P. Mody<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 14, 1946

Dear Mody,

Thank you for your letter<sup>2</sup> of the 28th December. As a matter of fact I have repeatedly referred to what is happening in Iran. I have further referred to the expansionist tendency of the Soviet Union in Europe and Asia. It is true, however, that I have laid greater stress on what is happening in Indonesia. This for two principal reasons. Firstly Indonesia is a very clear case of a united people struggling for their freedom and Dutch and British forces suppressing them. Secondly because Indian troops are being used there. Also some of the accounts of atrocities committed against the Indonesians are astonishingly bad.

While I have criticized Soviet expansionist policy in the West and the East and think that this is a dangerous element in the world situation, there are some aspects of this problem which are not quite clear to me. In eastern Europe, that is, in Poland and the Balkans, social conditions were very backward and big feudal states dominated the scene. In all these countries there was a strong movement against these feudal relics. Soviet Russia has taken advantage of these movements, encouraged them and supported them and has helped them in a large measure to get rid of feudalism. The land has gone to the peasant. In so far as this has happened, it was a progressive step. But the manner of doing it appears to me to have been wrong and in the result a number of subservient States have been created. Some thing of this kind appears to be happening in Iran also. The present Iran Government, you will remember, was imposed on the country by the British Government when Reza Shah was forcibly removed. It has been a Government not only reactionary but subservient to Britain. Against it some progressive forces in the country have risen. Taking advantage of this situation Russia has brought undue pressure on the Iranian Government and is apparently trying to make it completely subservient to its policy. Apart from internal aspects of this question, it is very likely to lead to increasing trouble in the Middle East and possibly to war.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. H.P. Mody Papers, N.M.M.L.

2 Mody wrote: "It has perplexed me to find you have not raised your voice against the policy of cynical, brutal aggression which Russia is pursuing in Iran."



**34. To H.M. Desai<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
January 16, 1946

My dear Desai,

I have your letter of the 8th January. I know very well that some members of the Board of Ministers in Ceylon have been pursuing an anti-Indian policy in the past. I think that this is injurious both to India and to Ceylon. So far as we are concerned we must not be influenced by other people's policy too much. We must take up the correct line and stick to it. I have tried to indicate that line in my note<sup>2</sup> on Lanka which was published some time back. That policy, briefly put, must be;

1. Full support of the demand for Ceylon's independence without any reservations or qualifications on behalf of Indians.
2. Full citizenship rights for Indians in Ceylon.
3. No appeal from Indians to the British Government for special safeguards as against the Sinhalese or in any other matter.
4. Indians should get citizenship rights in Ceylon and should consider themselves for political purposes as Ceylonese and should be treated as such. There should be no double citizenship though inevitably Indians, as to some extent Sinhalese also, will have the closest cultural ties with India.
5. The future of Ceylon to be determined by the people of Ceylon as a whole. This will include closer relations with India.

Whatever the attitude of some Sinhalese politicians might be, it is clear that in existing circumstances Indians are going to get no protection from the British Government. An appeal for such protection thus is not only undignified but fruitless and merely raises barriers between the Indians and the Sinhalese. We have to rely ultimately on the goodwill of the Sinhalese as well as on the united strength of the Indian elements there. On no account must Indians agree to any position derogatory to their individual and national dignity. At the same time they can claim no special rights or privileges and they must always remember that the interests of the people of Ceylon must come first. There is no other policy even from the point of view of the narrowest self-interest. It is no good thinking in old terms. All old standards are disappearing, among them dependence on the British power. In the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. See *ante*, pp. 440-451. The letter to N.A.F. Meenamangal embodies this note.



future only strength and goodwill count. Naturally a free India will make a tremendous difference. I have not a shadow of a doubt that a free India and a free Ceylon must hang together. Specially Ceylon cannot remain by itself. It is possible that when India becomes free, Ceylon may well continue for a while as a part of the British empire. Anyhow these questions are for the future. For the present we must not take up any attitude which on the one hand lessens goodwill between Indians and Ceylonese, and on the other which is injurious to the natural rights and dignity of the Indian people.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 35. To D. Mitrany<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 16, 1946

Dear Mr. Mitrany,<sup>2</sup>

Agatha Harrison gave me your letter<sup>3</sup> of the 5th December 1945. I appreciate what you say about the difficulties that face us all over the world today. In a sense the world is always turning a new corner but I do share your opinion that the present is a big turning-point in history. I feel that way and yet I am by no means sure which way it will turn. I feel a little hesitant in writing on a subject which eludes my grasp, though I have thought much about it and have certain ideas on the subject. Inevitably when a long-distance vision is somewhat clouded, one seeks relief in some activity which seems to be right for the moment at least. You mention in your letter the names of some very eminent thinkers and philosophers. How far I will fit in with that group I do not know.

There is a practical difficulty also, the difficulty of finding leisure for this kind of writing. I immerse myself in so many activities that events

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. b. 1888; professor, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 1933-53; his publications include *Marx Against the Peasant*.

3. He asked Jawaharlal to contribute an article on the "deeper problems of the time" for a new periodical, *Contact*, which he was editing.

rush past me. I try to keep as detached as I can but it is difficult. Anyway I should like to try to write some thing for you because the idea appeals to me though I doubt my capacity for writing anything really worthwhile. I shall not definitely promise. Could you let me know by what date you would like to have my article?

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 36. Common Policies for Asia<sup>1</sup>

The news from China that the civil war has ended and a basis of agreement<sup>2</sup> arrived at to ensure the unity and the peaceful development of China has been received with the liveliest satisfaction in India. We do not know the details of this agreement and in any event it is not for us to consider these details. The major fact is that China has had the wisdom to compose its internal quarrel. This is a matter of major significance to India, to Asia and to the world. We all look to China to take a lead in the regeneration of Asia. We hope in India also to do our best for this great task. If China and India hold together the future of Asia is assured. Even now Asia does not play her full part in international affairs and her interests are often ignored. This state of affairs must be ended.

There is much talk now of some kind of an Asian federation. The immediate need is, however, for a drawing together of the countries of Asia so that they can consider their common problems together. India and China will have to confer together some time or other. India, situated as she is, is the dominant factor in the defence of South East Asia as well as of the Middle East. Indeed all the countries of the Indian Ocean, from Australia to Egypt, have common problems of defence and will also have ultimately intimate trade contacts. A time is

1. Statement given to Paul Feng, correspondent of the Central News Agency of China, Delhi, 20 January 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The differences between Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists had been settled for the time being following their agreement on steps to be taken to unify the administration, control the army and widen the scope of democratic government.

coming when their representatives should meet together to draw up common policies in so far as this is possible. I trust that a fully representative Asian conference will be able to meet before very long. Probably India will be the best place for such a conference to meet.

### 37. Real Peace As Far Away As Ever<sup>1</sup>

Question: If Britain had lost the war, would India have obtained freedom from the victorious Axis?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is rather futile to guess what would have happened if history had taken a different course. Undoubtedly, the victory of the Axis powers would have been disastrous for freedom and democracy throughout the world. However, the present victory of the United Nations has thus far been a victory in war only, and not in peace. It remains to be seen what it makes of peace. While there are some elements of hope, there are obvious reasons for grave misgivings. What is happening, not only in the higher councils of the big powers but also in Indonesia and Indo-China, is not conducive to peace and freedom.

The people, who have waged war and ultimately won the war, thought too little of the real aims and objects which they loudly proclaimed. Many of them wanted the *status quo* to continue. But this, of course, never happened, and so we have a conflict that still goes on. Big problems await solution, and real peace is as far away as ever.

I believe that if the leaders of the United Nations had pursued a different course, the duration of the last war would have been lessened considerably, and the consequences today would have been infinitely better for the whole world. That chance was lost at a cost of millions of lives and infinite suffering. Other chances are appearing now, and the big question is whether they will be seized or not, and whether they will be considered with vision and judgment, or in the discredited terms of power politics.

The age of atomic energy is upon us, and there is no escape from the two alternatives — a solution of world problems and the establishment

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 21 January 1946. From *The Tribune*, 22 January 1946.



of a world order based on freedom everywhere, or world conflict and destruction on a colossal scale. To put it in another way, there will be either a free association of nations in the world, or the domination by one power of a shattered world.

Q: Do you believe in coordinated action of eastern countries — Arabs and non-Arabs — in matters of common interest against the political aggression of western countries?

JN: I am convinced that coordination of various countries in the Middle East, India and South East Asia is not only possible but undoubtedly certain in the future. The question of an Asiatic federation is perhaps premature, but some kind of closer association between these countries is necessary, both for defence and trade purposes.

In Egypt in the west, and in Indonesia in the east, there is today a common feeling which is bringing them nearer to each other. For the moment the feeling has to do chiefly with the attainment of freedom, but other questions are looming up in the present context of the world, which affect both the nations intimately, and to some extent jointly. Everyone from the Middle East to South East Asia knows that India is the crux of these questions, by virtue of both its intrinsic importance and its strategic position. As Wendell Willkie pointed out the question of Indian freedom exercised the minds of statesmen from Egypt to China. The closer union of a number of Asian countries will be in no way anti-European or anti-anything else.

European aggression, as such, is fast fading out. All of us stand for an international order, and, if proper international order is established, involving free nations, there will be no need for any smaller federations. Until such a time arrives, the long-oppressed nations of Asia will inevitably seek to protect themselves by holding together as far as possible, and presenting a joint front in the councils of the world. Even now Asia is rather ignored in the United Nations although it is apparent that Asia is going to play a big part in the future.

I have suggested that a conference of various Asian countries including Egypt be held to consider common problems. The best place for this conference will be India, which is centrally situated, and which in future is bound to play an important role.

The recent happenings in Indonesia have greatly agitated not only the people of India but people all over Asia. What is happening in the Middle East also fills us with disquiet. The problems before the countries of Asia are more or less similar — defence, getting rid of feudal

structures, establishment of democratic institutions, development of industry and agriculture, and raising rapidly of the standard of living of the masses.

In the solution of these problems we should gladly cooperate with the rest of the world, and take its help, but that help cannot be accepted if there is any element of domination.

### 38. The Concept of Asian Unity<sup>1</sup>

Question: Do you think that a federation of Asian countries is practicable as the next step?

Jawaharlal Nehru: That is a possibility in the near future. But much depends on the development on right lines of the United Nations Organisation. If the U.N. is really based on the elimination of imperialism and colonialism, I see some hope for it as the beginning of a world order. Otherwise, and inevitably, various large groups will be formed for self-defence and mutual help.

There is at present a considerable feeling in the countries of Asia in favour of holding together and cooperating for their own protection against outside aggression. If, unfortunately, future conflicts should arise leading to a disastrous war, Asia is almost certain to be one of the main centres. Apart from war, there is economic penetration which is bound to produce resistance. These considerations, as also old cultural bonds, are drawing India and her neighbours close to one another.

Q: Your statement does not quite answer my question whether an Asian federation is immediately capable of realisation.

JN: I cannot be definite beyond a point. A close union of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean, both for defence and trade purposes, is almost certain to emerge. In any such closer union India is bound to play a very significant part, both because of her intrinsic importance and her strategic position. No system of defence of these areas, from the Middle East to South East Asia, can be effective without

1. Interview to B. Shiva Rao, correspondent of *The Hindu* in Delhi, given on 21 January 1946. Printed in his book, *India's Freedom Movement* (New Delhi, 1972) pp. 134-138.



India's intimate participation. In all matters of trade policy too, India, which is likely to be industrialised rapidly, must develop contacts on either side.

Looking back to the past, one of the principal results of the British occupation of India was to cut her off almost completely from the rest of Asia. Our land routes were closed and almost our sole contact with the outside world for a long time was by sea with Britain. A great change is now taking place, partly because of new alignments and partly because of the development of air communications. The last war has helped bring China, South East Asia and the Middle East right near India.

A new consciousness has arisen in South Asia, and old memories of past contacts have revived. But the main incentive at present is to hold together. Whatever the future development of the United Nations Organisation might be, these Asian countries will look to one another more and more. Some form of a common organisation dealing with defence, trade and possibly other subjects seems to be an inevitable development.

Q: What other subjects have you in mind?

JN: A certain cooperation in foreign policy. The time has come when the representatives of all these Asian countries should meet and confer.

Q: The Indian delegation has not even claimed a place for India in the Security Council. What do you think of it?

JN: There is a strong feeling in Asia that the interests of Asian countries are being overlooked. Recent events in Indonesia and Indo-China have been bitterly resented in India and elsewhere in Asia. What is happening in Iran has also been viewed with great disquiet. I realise that in many of these countries there are reactionary and semi-feudal regimes which must change. But the way of changing is not to convert these countries into colonies or puppet states.

There is the likelihood of a conference or representatives of these Asian countries meeting to discuss their common problems. No definite and precise conclusions, I think, can be reached in the first conference and, in any event, not as long as India cannot freely function. But I prefer India as the most suitable venue for the conference.

Q: What could be its effect on India's internal problems? Both in the countries of the Middle East and in Indonesia there are large Muslim populations. On the aggregate the Hindus of India



would be a minority in comparison with the Muslim populations of South Asia.

JN: I do not believe in the bogey of a Pan-Islamic movement sweeping over South Asia. On the other hand, any form of closer association or union of these countries of the Middle East, India and South East Asia would go a long way towards removing the fears and suspicions of the Indian Muslims.

Such a union, of course, must be based on the complete freedom of each country. India has nothing to fear from any other country in Asia and these countries should not fear any intervention or dominance by India, whether in the political or in the economic sphere.

Q: Supposing India develops her industries rapidly, is there not a danger of an economic domination?

JN: No. India's future policy will be opposed to any exploitation of the markets or resources of the people in other countries. Both my party and the National Planning Committee have made it perfectly clear that we are not going to encourage Indian capitalist elements in Burma, Ceylon, East Africa or elsewhere at the expense of the people of these countries.

Q: Will not such a movement develop an Asian racial outlook?

JN: This I regard as almost impossible. It will not and cannot have any aggressive or racial character; nor will it be opposed in any way to America or the Soviet Union or any other power or group of powers. Towards the two main powers of the world it will cultivate the most friendly relations. The Soviet Union will touch it right across Asia, and America has already many and growing contacts. Don't you see the fact that such a union of different kinds of people and races will prevent it from developing a narrow racial or aggressive outlook? When imperialism and colonialism have been liquidated, the feeling against Europe or America will naturally disappear.

It is admitted now that the governments in all these countries should be democratic, with an increasing tendency towards socialisation. Naturally, a closer union of these democratic countries must be in itself democratic. In the matter of development of trade or industry we have to avoid the kind of colonial exploitation that we have had in the past. There will, of course, be growing international trade but each country would, as far as possible, aim at a measure of self-sufficiency.

### 39. To Jafar Zainuddin<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
February 5, 1946

Dear friend,<sup>2</sup>

I have received your letter of January 1st. I thank you for it. The cause of the Indonesians' fight for the independence of their Republic is our cause. The freedom of Indonesia is essential and so is the freedom and independence of India. We must cooperate as far as possible in the present and in the future.

It was my desire to visit Indonesia and to meet Dr. Sukarno and his comrades, but the Government of India and the British South East Command have not given me permission or the facilities to go there. And so I have been prevented from going. I hope, however, to visit Indonesia as soon as I am able to do so.

I have forwarded your letters addressed to Dr. Sukarno and the President of the Indonesian Republic, to the Committee of Indonesians in India and requested them to forward them to Java.

Merdeka.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The addressee was from Mecca.

### 40. India as a Unit of the World State<sup>1</sup>

The days of national isolation have gone forever. The question of India's freedom is an international issue. We can exist and prosper only as a unit of the world state.

It is clear from the point of defence and the future progress of industry, trade and communications that the mutual good relations of the

1. Interview to the correspondent of *Reynold's News*, Allahabad, 10 February 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 February 1946.

countries of the Middle East, as well as of South East Asia, will largely depend on India. In this I include Australia and New Zealand.

Geographically, India is so situated that any proper system of defence of this entire area or region must be based on India. Apart from this there are many cultural and sentimental bonds between us and our neighbours in the west and the east. It is inevitable that in future these bonds should develop in mutual cooperation and goodwill.

I firmly believe that China will in the near future be a strong and powerful state, closely associated with India, and playing an important role in the Pacific region.

I also believe that India will inevitably have special relations with the two big powers of the modern world — the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. The latter being a neighbour, we shall presumably have a closer contact with it. The United States can play a great part in India's industrial development.

Question: How do you envisage India's future relations with Great Britain?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Of course, I expect a peaceful and friendly settlement with Britain. If such a settlement is reached, India's relations with Britain will naturally be closer, as there are so many ties already developed between our two peoples — some good, many bad. I must point out, however, that such friendly relations can only grow between independent countries which can cooperate with each other. Otherwise the past will pursue us and poison our relations.

Q: Will you accept Dominion Status with the right to secede from the Commonwealth?

JN: No. From no point of view can India fit into a Dominion Status pattern which was meant to be, and has developed as, a combination of sister countries belonging more or less to the same stock. One must not forget also that India has itself been, for ages past, a mother country to many other countries in Asia. Apart from this, the past history of relations between India and England rules out Dominion Status. Finally, the present sentiment of everybody in India is opposed to it.

This does not mean that we should not have close relations and alliances with Britain and its Dominions. Indeed, we are more likely to have them as a free country without any compulsion. In any event, I will be the first man to recognise the existence of many ties and bonds which have arisen between India and England as a result of long association, but they will have to be adjusted.



The proper course is for the constituent assembly to nominate representatives of India who will meet the representatives of the British Government to consider these matters, and thus facilitate the process of adjustment.

Britain wants to transfer power to India but it does not know to whom to give it. Let me say this. A clear declaration of the recognition of India's independence is vital for any constitutional solution of Indian problems. Peaceful transfer of power is possible. It should be made to Indian representatives, or the constitution-making body which will come into existence after the provincial elections. The constitution, which this body will frame, must be accepted as final.

Of course, there will have to be some interim arrangement for the Central Government, while the constitution is being made. After the provincial elections, I envisage democratic governments in the provinces. It should be possible to reconstitute the Centre, as responsible as possible, to carry on the administration, with the help of democratic conventions and without the Viceroy's veto. I do not see any necessity for the exercise of the Viceroy's veto and special powers when such a democratic Centre is formed.

Pakistan cannot be discussed in the present atmosphere. Mr. Jinnah's demand for partition is completely impossible. For predominantly Muslim areas, we have accepted the principle that these areas will not be forced to remain in the Indian Union or federation. But there are overriding considerations:

- (1) A majority of the entire population of any area that wants to separate from India must express their wish on a specific issue;
- (2) No area should be compelled against its will to go out of India, for instance, southern Punjab, western Bengal and the city of Calcutta;
- (3) Defence of India must be regarded as the first consideration. Defence includes foreign affairs, communications, currency and such allied subjects.

In any event, in view of the strategic position of India and the developing world situation, the defence of India is of supreme importance. One must bear in mind that without security no real freedom for India — whether for Pakistan or for Hindustan — is possible.

In the present elections there is no specific issue of Pakistan. In fact, Pakistan is not defined at all. It is a vague sentiment which appeals to a section of Muslims who have not considered its implications and consequences. It may be said that all votes cast against the Muslim League are against Pakistan. But votes cast for the Muslim League may or may not be for Pakistan.

On the other hand, it is admitted and declared by the Congress that there should be the largest amount of autonomy given to the constituting units of the Indian federation for the so-called Pakistan areas which can be semi-independent subject to the question of defence. In addition, of course, cultural, judicial and other safeguards for the protection of minorities and groups and areas, which might be considered as backward, will be provided in the new constitution.





# Tai Hing!

Three years and three months ago we suspended  
publication. Not, as normally happens in this country,  
by imperial decree, but in obedience to the mandate  
of the Congress, and because we felt that we  
bore a burden and a responsibility compelled  
us to refuse <sup>to submit</sup> ourselves to ignoble conditions.  
Three years have passed and we ~~start~~ <sup>start</sup> again,  
young but the memory of those years is too  
heavy on our minds and we are much older  
than the brief space of years might indicate.

Three years of war and tumult, and  
the cruel and death, of hope and despair,  
of the sudden and unexpected rising of the  
Chinese man in India, and the  
British attack on his leaders and on his  
and to brutal suppressions. Years of struggle  
in the north, and of thousands driven  
into the south, and of countless wanderings,  
keeping the flag of freedom high against  
the forces of oppression. Years also of other things  
blood and fire, and the loss of many  
many lives and the loss of many  
dear friends and the loss of many



## YOUTH AND THE FUTURE





## 1. Students and Politics<sup>1</sup>

Previously, my opinion about Indian students was that they behaved irresponsibly while tackling serious problems, but this opinion has undergone a complete change since August 1942, when the students acted in a manner so bold and responsible.

The question whether students should take part in politics is the creation of the mischievous brain of foreigners who do not want them to participate in political activities. I think any student who is politically conscious can participate in politics. It is your duty to make students politically, physically and mentally sound and strong. The students must study every problem thoroughly and impartially before they can pronounce a correct judgment. They should not develop the idea that it is only the students who have to give the country a lead. Yet it is their duty even to correct their leaders when they are wrong.

Do not care about the opposition from the camp of the Communists. March forward with confidence, and no one can check your progress. Do not waste your time, for the very idea of it is repulsive to me. Your work in the villages is the real service to the people.

1. Address to Congress student workers, Lahore, 17 July 1945. From *The Tribune*, 18 July 1945.

## 2. Students and India's Future<sup>1</sup>

There are many big and difficult questions awaiting solution. These have been accumulated as a legacy of British rule for the last 150 years. The present Government is incapable of solving these problems. The heavy burden of solving them will have to be shouldered by the young men and women of India.

1. Address to students, Poona, 15 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 17 September and *The Hindustan Times*, 17 September 1945.

The British Government has been pursuing a policy of placating the reactionary elements and crushing the national spirit in the country. It is hopelessly incompetent; corruption is rampant, and a new rich class of profiteers and black marketeers has grown in the country. The Bengal famine has demonstrated the utter lack of control and inefficiency of the Government. The future government will have to face these and many other temporary, but difficult, problems. If these problems are not solved by that government, the government itself will be dissolved by the problems.

The nation has developed a strength of resistance and has grown bold and courageous. In the earlier stages of the political struggle, the problem was how to awaken the common people from their traditional helplessness and make them free from fear. Not only the kisan but even the educated had a very low morale and were terribly afraid of fighting injustice. The last 25 years, which form a glorious chapter of India's history, have seen the awakening of the masses as a result of the Congress movement of civil disobedience and satyagraha.

The movement of the last three years reveals the supreme courage and power of endurance of the people. I am proud and happy to say that the nation has successfully passed this test. In the absence of any special direction from the accredited leaders, who were spirited away to gaols, there was a spontaneous movement of the common people. This was the real revolution in the country. The Government crushed this rising. Many mistakes might have been committed, but the people, and particularly the students, showed remarkable enthusiasm and organising capacity and courage. I am particularly happy over the part played by women in the country, who encountered comparatively greater hardship than men.

I feel confident that India is bound to be free, though I cannot say when. I am not saying this because of the advent of the Labour Government in England which I do not expect will be very helpful to us, but any student of politics can see the new tendency towards freedom in all the subject countries. This freedom cannot, however, be attained without discipline and the development of a cooperative spirit. India with her rich culture and a glorious past is bound to have a bright future, but we must shake off the dirt and dust of the past and develop a scientific approach to the problems of the future. The world is changing terribly fast. We must shed our exclusiveness and fossilized shell and keep in touch with the growing tide of freedom in the world.

I advise the young and old alike to be proud and ambitious — proud of their country and culture, and ambitious, not for small success in life, but to play a big part in attaining the higher goals of life.



### 3. The Task Before Students<sup>1</sup>

Students should try to understand the world problems in their political context, instead of raising slogans whose meaning they do not understand.

They cannot generate a leadership for the people merely by raising slogans or discussing world politics in their debates. A country might have many politicians, but few statesmen. The leadership of a country is provided by an organisation which maintains discipline in its ranks and keeps a cherished goal.

Our country is passing through a crisis. Asia itself is in the throes of a turmoil. A new India will emerge out of our struggle for freedom, and the youth of India will have to play an important part in shaping it. The students of this country will have to mobilise all their resources and strength so as to be in the forefront of our struggle for the liberation of India. I urge you to end all your factional disputes and march ahead as one united students' body.

1. Address to a students meeting, Bombay, 27 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 28 September 1945.

### 4. Unity Among Students<sup>1</sup>

I appeal to the student community to close its ranks and work as a disciplined body, dedicated to securing the independence of the country under the leadership and guidance of the Congress.

The Communists, consistent in their creed and conviction, may withhold their support to the fight for freedom, but no such ideological gulf separates the main body of students from the cause which the Congress has made its own. There might be differences on other issues, but no right-thinking person should have any hesitation in rallying under the Congress, as far as the main objective is concerned.

1. Address to students, Lucknow, 8 October 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 10 October, *The Hindustan Times*, 10 October and *The Hindu*, 11 October 1945.

If there is no basic difference, there is no necessity for having parallel organisations. I advocate solidarity and unity in the students organisation, allowing groups with different shades of opinion to function in a healthy manner in the parent body. I deplore the existence of students' organisations based on religious or communal factions. I want to educate the people on the problems of life and seek solutions by adopting a scientific approach. But with preconceived dogmas we will not be able to view the problems dispassionately. We get more and more narrow-minded. Communalism among politicians is bad enough. It is worse when it gets into the ranks of our students.

Your organisation should be a federation whose doors should be kept open to all sections. The various units in it may not agree on all questions, cultural, economic and social, but so long as they subscribe to the fundamental policy of the Congress on national independence, they have a right to be affiliated to that organisation. Office-hunters and self-seekers must not have any place in it. If you set up such a body you will be laying the foundation of a true student movement in the country.

You should desist from passing pompous resolutions on matters which do not concern you. Leave that job to the politicians. By passing such irresponsible resolutions you make yourselves a laughing stock in the world.

I counter the prevailing notion that the profession of a politician does not require any training. If you want to be a statesman, mere oratory or a theoretical study of politics is not enough. You must take part in political movements, too. I do not mean, thereby, that you should necessarily participate in satyagraha, for a revolution is a different thing altogether. All theories and dogmas, either of religion or Marxism, must be closely related to the course of life, because if they get out of touch with life they will be lost. The Communist Party of India can be cited as an example of this dogmatic mentality. The trouble with Indian Communists is that they have abandoned the path of rational and scientific approach to all problems, with the result that they are completely out of touch with the country's living currents. They are undoing whatever good work they have done in the past. They are not harming the country so much as themselves. But what hurts me most is that so many honest and sincere workers are being lost to the country because of having been misled.

I am confident that India will win freedom in the near future. But freedom is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. In a free India, every man, woman and child must be assured at least of adequate food, housing and clothing. Such an India cannot be built with brick and mortar alone, but with human material. There is no dearth of talent



in the country, and given an opportunity, India's men and women will play their part well.

## 5. Quiet Study and Hard Work<sup>1</sup>

I thank you for the purse you have given me for the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital. My relationship with this institution is such that I feel reluctant to seek donations for it. Yet when it is given, I cannot but thank you. The money value of the amount may not be much. A millionaire could have perhaps signed a cheque for the whole of it in a moment. The real value of the purse, collected in the manner of this one, is certainly greater.

Eulogistic remarks have been made about me. It may be all right to praise a man like Gandhiji on occasions, but to speak in a similar strain about every minor personality is to display a lack of sense of proportion. As for the references to my birthday, I like them even less. The meeting has nothing to do with my birthday and if it had, I would not have attended it.

If you want your words to be respected, don't make them high-sounding. Do not indulge in adjectives and heap superlatives on individuals. Keep your eyes steadily on ideas, causes and ideals.

When I was a student like you, I saw the dream of freedom which I now pursue. A large part of my life has been spent in this pursuit. Sometimes freedom seemed within my grasp, but so often it has receded. In this connection, I refer to the habit of people promising to sacrifice their very lives in the cause of freedom. I am not at all eager to die. I want to work, to accomplish certain tasks, to achieve certain objectives. If in this endeavour death comes to me, I would face it cheerfully. But fighting and dying cannot be an end by itself. The real end for which we are working is to change the present evil order and establish a new and better one. It can only be done by quiet study and hard work. I ask you to study your past, the glorious cultural heritage of India which has spread from the Philippines to Sinkiang and Rome. I also ask you to ponder over the causes of the country's fall.

1. Speech at a students meeting, Bombay, 13 November 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 November 1945.



At the same time you should reflect on the tremendous implications of the atomic age and shape your life and work in the light of these reflections.

Mere enthusiasm is of no use. An enthusiast might shout 'Jawaharlal ki jai' and yet inflict a blow on a political opponent. I condemn all the petty violence recently in evidence and particularly the use of the name of the Congress while indulging in violence. With the approach of the elections, passions are rising. Keep a check on yourselves. Hold yourselves in control.

I also condemn futile wranglings and power politics so much in evidence among students. Keep off airy theories; take to constructive, matter-of-fact action.

A gentleman is one who gives more than he receives. If a society is dominated by individuals who receive more than they give, it is a sure sign of decadence.

A capitalist order is the classic instance of men who receive everything and give back nothing. I advise you not to complain about how the world has dealt with you, but to wear yourselves out in service.

India is not going to be a slave country for long. Political freedom is at hand. It is your duty to strive and struggle for it as long as it remains unattained. But after freedom, there are even more tremendous tasks to be performed. It is for these that the youth of today should prepare themselves, if they are true to their profession of loyalty to a new and just social order.

## 6. On the Struggle Ahead<sup>1</sup>

I advise the students not to sit contented merely by passing resolutions in the Students Congress which is holding its session here tomorrow, but to make their institution a living organisation. The students must go into the villages, settle themselves among the villagers and win their confidence by rendering them service. They must launch a vigorous campaign

1. The train by which Jawaharlal was travelling on 15 November 1945 from Bombay to Allahabad was detained at Jubbulpore for four hours. He addressed a large gathering including many students from his compartment and later he came out on the platform and addressed a public meeting. Both the speeches are printed together. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 17 November and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 November 1945.

against illiteracy. They must study their economic condition. This knowledge will help them in shouldering responsibilities in the future. I exhort the students to sink their petty differences because they are nothing to do with principles and ideologies, but are due to personal factors.

I would also advise the students to take part in politics without sacrificing their studies. They should not make themselves mere platform orators. They should not, however, sit idle when a struggle is launched. Their help is very essential. Talk little but work more, avoid, as far as possible, the demonstrative side of our activities and engage yourselves rather in constructive work than in organising processions and raising slogans. Start study circles to deepen your knowledge in art, culture and literature. This is my message to the organisers of the Students Congress here.

The I.N.A. and the Indonesian affairs have aroused a fresh wave of interest in the country. It is a matter of great regret that against the country's wishes, Indian troops are being sent to Indonesia to crush Indonesians who are fighting for their freedom against the Dutch and French imperialisms. The British Government's policy<sup>2</sup> of helping the Dutch and the French betrays its own anxiety for retaining its imperialistic hold in Asia. Since we ourselves are not free and are not strong enough, Indian troops, much to our shame, are being used against Indonesians.

So long as we are not free such crises are bound to continue. The fact is, had we been strong enough we would have overthrown the foreign domination in no time, and would not have found ourselves in such a helpless position. But I am sure we will muster enough strength to regain our freedom. Instead of cursing and abusing our enemies and wasting our energy thereby, we should utilise our time and energy in purposeful actions and for bigger issues. One does not know when and how the next struggle for freedom will be launched. Equally, I cannot say what is in store for us in 1946.

I have noticed that the Congress has gathered much strength, and the atmosphere is surcharged with enthusiasm. We should harness these energies in the right direction and in an organised manner. For who knows when we may be put to the test again? It may be within a few months. Therefore, it is essential that we should further strengthen ourselves by avoiding conflicts on minor issues.

2. Attlee had asserted that the British were "under a strong moral obligation to their Dutch allies" and Bevin had said that "the British government had a definite agreement that they provide for the Netherlands East Indies Government to resume as rapidly as practicable full responsibility for the administration of the Netherlands East Indies territory".

I strongly disapprove of such slogans as 'Lalquila tore do' because who will be so foolish as to break this historical monument.

## 7. To the Youth of the Punjab<sup>1</sup>

To the youth of the Punjab, who are so full of generous enthusiasm but at the same time often lacking in discipline, I want to say that the time will come soon when disciplined service will count for more than mere enthusiasm. I know you are capable of this if you turn your minds to it. Great changes are coming over India and great responsibilities will await those who are capable of shouldering them. So prepare for them, and forget the petty questions and squabbles of the day. The Punjab must play a brave part in the days to come. This part ultimately depends on the youth.

At present I would call upon you to help in every way the Congress candidates in the Assembly elections. This support is not meant so much for individuals as for principles — the principles and objectives for which the Congress stands. Each Congress candidate is the standard-bearer of the cause of freedom and independence. The measure of success of Congress candidates will be the measure of the country's progress to the goal of independence. That will determine the next great step forward. So it becomes essential for us to do our utmost for the success of the Congress in the elections.

1. Lahore, 19 November 1945. Message given to the Punjab Youth Congress. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 November 1945.

## 8. On the System of Medical Education<sup>1</sup>

The root cause of all diseases in India is the low standard of living. Unless this problem is satisfactorily solved, India cannot make any progress.

1. Address to medical students, Lucknow, 28 November 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 30 November 1945.



The building up of a proper and efficient medical service in the country is a gigantic task indeed. The present system of training in medical colleges, which gives opportunities to only a few students of the upper classes, has encouraged nepotism and has closed the door to the entry of students from the lower classes.

The government in the country is a most incompetent and inefficient government. The death of 35 lakhs of people in Bengal is a calamity of the first magnitude. It has demonstrated the callousness of the bureaucratic government.

I am surprised how the starving people of Bengal could have died by calmly submitting to death. Why did they not retaliate against those responsible for this disaster? If I were there, I would not have kept quiet.

The U.S.S.R. has become one of the best medically organised countries in the world by socialising the medical service and offering equal opportunities to all. Unless the doors of educational institutions are open to all countrymen the present system will not help in providing relief to the people of all classes.

## 9. The Passion and the Vision<sup>1</sup>

India is now on the verge of freedom, after the turmoil of many years of struggle. Freedom will come to us mainly because of our struggle, and partly because of the world conditions. But I emphasise that it will be chiefly because of us. No freedom is worthwhile if it comes because of extraneous reasons.

Our country has been, if I may use a stock expression, all a barren waste during the past 150 years of foreign rule in spite of a few big cities, and some superficial improvement here and there. Our country consists of hundreds and thousands of villages, and you have simply to go to these villages to know the depth of poverty, misery and degradation in which the people live. When freedom comes we shall have to build up our country from scratch. This will require a very large number of trained young men with a crusading spirit and an ability to work together.

1. Address to students of Calcutta University, Calcutta, 12 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 13 December 1945.

From what I know and sense, a large number of our youth are afire with enthusiasm. Sometimes in excitement they may act wrongly. But there is life, vitality and a desire to do something. The only thing that is lacking is the opportunity to do it. This opportunity will ultimately come when India achieves freedom and the shackles that tie us down are removed.

During the last 25 years we have tried to touch and influence the spirit, the mind and the heart of the people of India. It has been a big job to deal with some 400 million oppressed people, but their imprisoned spirit is not altogether dead. We challenged the authority that rules over us, and in 1942 this challenge became bigger and took a larger shape. The world saw the extraordinary sight of an unarmed people rising against the might of the great British empire.

In this way we tried to get rid of the psychological fear which obsessed the common people as well as the so-called educated class. Our young men of today hardly realise the change that has come over India during the last 25 or 30 years. You take many things for granted. But what you see around you today is very different from what it was a quarter of a century ago. You are really the products of the struggle that was carried on during this quarter of a century.

Now the future beckons us. And we are eager, perhaps too eager, to go forward. Eagerness is good, but we have to learn to march in line. We have to do great things, and we must march in line with discipline, with order, with a clear objective and with a well-thought-out plan before us. Otherwise our vitality and energy will be wasted. We have to be aware, whether we are engineers, doctors or scientists or shopkeepers or peasants, that we are all soldiers of India's freedom and we all have to possess qualities which soldiers possess — discipline, courage, united action, capacity for sacrificing one's self for the common good. We have to adopt peaceful means. We must remember that peaceful means does require all the qualities of a soldier.

During the firing at Calcutta, the students behaved not only with amazing discipline and courage but with amazing peacefulness and non-violence. They behaved in a way that is admirable. I do not know in detail what happened afterwards. But one fundamental thing stood out from the later events. Besides the students, other people emerged suddenly from their shell and acted. They might have acted wrongly here and there but they did act. This spontaneous upheaval is amazing. With such a kind of upheaval, hundreds and thousands of people were moved and created a truly revolutionary atmosphere. At that time academic discussion about what was wrong and what was right did not matter. These upheavals occur just as an earthquake occurs. These



human earthquakes, or these human floods, moved large masses of humanity. What happened in Calcutta a fortnight ago is very revealing, not only about Calcutta but about India also. Suddenly one can see what lies behind the thin veil that covers the mind of India.

Truly, it has been said that India is full of explosives. We may like an explosion or we may not like it. But if we are wise to see, it is there and it is likely to be there. That is India of today. No amount of persuasion or compulsion or threat can take away the fact that India is resolved to go ahead. There is a passion in the Indian mind today, the passion for freedom. There is a feeling of intolerable irritation that things should continue as they are today.

But various factors may hold us back. We must not indulge in any wrong action simply because we are excited or because we are impatient for freedom. If we act, we shall act in a proper manner and peacefully, even though our hearts may be afire. Young men must not lose control over themselves too often. They must remember that great things are achieved only by a determined and unified step in a big way, and not by a sporadic action, not by frittering away their energies in petty actions. So while keeping up that revolutionary spirit let not the fire in them extinguish.

Who is to tell them when to utilise it? Sometimes there is nobody to tell them. One is to decide for oneself. But normally speaking it is not right and safe for students or young men to take suddenly the reins of the nation in their own hands and run away. For they are simply not trained to judge a situation, the aspects of a complex phenomenon before them. Their action might vitally affect not only them but the whole province and the country. Therefore, they have to take counsel, indeed, leave political leadership to those who are considered by them qualified to lead.

Apart from all this, they have to think of the future. The question today is not how to push out the British Government from India. In the context of history the British empire is a past event. It is already something that is extinct although imperialism might cling desperately to its life.

The real problems before the youth of the country are: How to build up the future India? What relations should free India have with other countries? How should it fit in with the world structure? How should India help to shape the world? Any action that might be taken today must relate to the problems of tomorrow.

India is a very ancient land and we are the inheritors of its tradition. It is a proud inheritance but there are disadvantages also. Long inheritance brings dust and cobwebs of the past with it. It is a terrible bur-



den, the burden of tradition which weighs us down. Sometimes, I feel that we must build up a new society without any entanglement of the past. But that would upset the equilibrium. When the British Government leave this country, the changeover would be a big event. There will be a tremendous release of energy, hundreds of doors will be thrown open through which we will be able to act. The old system has got to change, but we shall have to keep a balanced equilibrium if we are to function properly, and not waste our energy.

You have a very sad example before you. China achieved her freedom 30 to 40 years ago. But there is an internal conflict even though the Chinese are free. Today one looks at China with sadness. I hope that this internal trouble will end soon, and a new, united and prosperous China will rise. So if such a situation can arise in the great ancient country of China it is not naturally impossible that we may get involved in this kind of trouble in our country. Therefore, when we take any action today we have to bear tomorrow in our mind.

India is not something outside us. When we sing *Bande Mataram* whom do we honour? We honour none except ourselves, not the mountains, the trees and the rocks of India. We are Mother India, and we have to raise ourselves. Live upto that. Do not lower the flag of India in any way. Every great deed you do, raises India in the estimation of the world. The burden of tomorrow will fall on you. It will require a lot of preparation, a lot of training and action and a lot of discipline. The India of tomorrow will not be one of shouting slogans. It will be an India of trained men working to build up a nation. We shall have tremendous opportunities of work. If you cannot work, you will become a burden, a drag on India. A magnificent opportunity is coming for a life of adventure, and hard work. Do not lead a dull life, and do not seek security, but work hard in a spirit of adventure. What does it matter what happens afterwards? Work hard and do not mind what the consequences would be. If you have this outlook you will experience the real joy of life.

## 10. India Like a Volcano<sup>1</sup>

Young men and women of Shillong, I do not know what to speak to you this morning. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that I have

1. Address to students, Shillong, 17 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 20 December 1945.

so much in mind to tell you that I do not know what to pick and choose, and what not.

This is the first occasion that I visit the Khasi Hills, though I have previously wandered about in the Assam Valley and Surma Valley. If I did not come here then, it was not because I did not wish to come.

I am a lover of mountains and I am myself a child of mountains much higher than yours. The province of Assam is a frontier province of India — a frontier which in the past was hardly looked upon as a frontier, but which during the recent war suddenly emerged as the most dangerous frontier of India. In the same way, though rather distantly, I am also a frontier man. For I, or rather my family, originally belonged to and came from Kashmir.

There is a good deal of difference between those who live in mountains and those who live on plains. There is also a great deal of difference between the people who live in a frontier area and those who live far in the interior of the country. As I have contacts with the frontier of India and with the mountains, I perhaps understand and appreciate to a certain extent your feelings better than those who live in the interior of the country.

I see many things here which strongly bear the impress of India. I also see many other things which I do not find elsewhere in India.

I am reminded of the basic fact that all through the long ages there has been a tremendous variety in India, and yet always a tremendous unity. The two have gone always together and the unity has been greater than the political disunity during many years of our history. It has not been affected by political changes at the top. Despite many gaps in our history, which dates back to over 5,000 years, India's cultural unity has continuously existed.

Five thousand years would be a big burden to the people of any country. They may be a source of inspiration at times but they are also a terrible burden. For a long past brings with it all manner of good as well as bad features. If you look back to this long period of Indian history you will find many features. I would like to draw your attention to one or two of them.

India has an extraordinary power of absorbing the people coming from outside. You will find in history that new people who came into India produced a new synthesis of culture. Probably because of this reason, India has some kind of a cultural unity and has survived cataclysms and disasters. Changes occurred at the top, but the basic foundation of Indian life and culture was never affected by them.

In fact, if you go to Malaya, Java, Indo-China or other countries which belong to Greater India, you will find the impress of Indian culture and



tradition in many forms. India is not merely a country within its own boundary, but India has gone far into Asia. India has been a mother country to a great part of Asia and even today there are many who look upon India as a mother country to some extent. A student from Thailand wrote a letter to me in which he used the curious expression that India was looked upon by him as a grandfather country.

India today is like a volcano. It may erupt any moment. If a proper approach leading to independence is made by the British Government, we shall agree to it. Nobody likes a conflict. Certainly we do not want a conflict unnecessarily. It involves enormous sufferings. But it is equally certain that if there is a delay or postponement of the issue of independence, or if any other obstacle is put in the way, we shall take the initiative and we shall go ahead, whatever the consequences.

Free India will be a federation of willing units which will possess absolute autonomy to develop and grow according to their own cultures and ways of life.

We are on the verge of independence. But I cannot fix a date when it will come. I can only say that India is bound to be independent and that too very soon. We shall have to face problems not only of making a constitution for free India, but also we shall have to decide — and it is the most important problem — our outlook in respect of world problems.

You cannot isolate a country and live apart from other countries of the world. We talk in terms of independence and democracy. We want independence but independence does not mean isolation. Today not even the biggest countries can afford to live in isolation. We are to be one of the members of the world community, but that must be on equal terms with others. On no other terms are we going to submit to any other nation. As an independent nation we shall join the world community and also seek a solution of world problems in cooperation with other nations.

At the same time we have got to solve our own problems — the problems that have cropped up during these 150 years or more of British rule. During these long years the development of India has been arrested and our economic condition has deteriorated.

The most urgent and immediate problem that faces us today, whether we get independence or not, is that of food, clothing and housing for our people. The constitution of free India may be good or bad. That is a lawyer's angle of viewing an issue. The fundamental problem of India is poverty. It is shameful and disgraceful that a country should be so poor and have such a low standard of life as there is in India. We should get rid of that poverty and get rid of it quickly.



We must draw up our constitution and set up our government from the point of view of raising the standard of living to a higher level. The problem is not one of giving jobs here and there, as most people thought in the past. We have to get rid of poverty and unemployment on a very big scale, because we are living on the verge of a catastrophe and we might sometime be toppled down.

Only two and a half years ago there was a terrible famine in Bengal, a famine which killed three and a half million people and crushed many millions of others in that province. Just think of it. What are you going to say about the Government under which such a thing happened? Must not that Government be publicly tried? Today they are trying the war criminals. Let them try them. But what about a government under which three and a half million helpless people died of starvation? I would like to know if such a government is not criminal and guilty a thousand times more than those who are being tried as war criminals. But strangely enough such a government continues to exist in India today.

So we are living on the verge of a catastrophe and if we do not look up we will be toppled down and will have the worst famines, not one but many. Now the war is over and there will be unemployment in the country. Nobody in India cares for those who are unemployed. The jobless simply languish and eventually die. But no national government can afford to ignore them. This grave problem has to be faced in the immediate future.

If we continue to base the government on the same structure as built up by the British Government then, though the British might go away from here, we shall not be able to solve our problems. We shall have to change the whole structure, otherwise most of us will die of sheer starvation.

This is just one of the many problems and you—the young men and women of India—will have to think of them and understand them, because the burden of shouldering them and solving them will soon be yours. Tomorrow or day after tomorrow you will be entering the wide world and what India in the future will be depends ultimately on you. So when you think of the freedom of India—this is a good thing to do—it is good that you get excited about it, and that you feel a passionate urge to it. It is good that you are prepared to make sacrifices for this great cause. At the same time, think of it in the larger context of raising the common man and of removing the many evils that persist in the country today.

The other day we had a glimpse of what lay behind the superficial atmosphere of peace in India. You must have read what happened in

Calcutta three or four weeks ago. When a small procession of students — I do not know if it was small or big — was marching along it was stopped in a certain part of the city. The students sat down. They saw no reason why they should be stopped. At once there was firing, not once but many times, and 30 or 40 students died and hundreds of others were wounded. The students showed astounding courage. They withstood the firing and lathi charges and did not budge an inch. The point whether they were right in taking out a procession is a small matter. The point is that it requires tremendous courage to face a firing and remain unmoved.

I would also draw your particular attention to another fact. When the people of Calcutta heard about the firing there was a tremendous excitement. The whole city came out in the streets. All shops were closed, transport services stopped, buses and tramcars and railways, in fact the whole life of the great city, was dislocated. It was an extraordinary sight, an amazing happening. What does this indicate to you? It indicates — not because this thing happened in Calcutta as this kind of thing may happen anywhere in India — the intolerance in the common man. It shows how the mind of the common man is working.

We are sitting on the top of a volcano and it is right that it should be so, because one thing that is intolerable to me is that we should tamely succumb to the present conditions. I do not want violence or big upheavals, or conflicts, but if this kind of thing continues, I would wish the people to rise against them rather than submit to humiliation.

In Assam we find all kinds of distinctive people. Some of them are here in this meeting — our Naga friends. Shillong itself is a city of Khasis and other tribes. I do not know how many of you who have come here from outside look upon these tribal people. But I want to tell you how I have felt about them ever since I came to know of them. They attract me greatly and I feel that when the country becomes free we must take a very special interest in them and help them to develop themselves in their own way. I do not believe in drawing them out of their way of life, and forcing them into another way of life. We who have got some advantages should help them in every possible way to grow in their own way.

In the election manifesto there is a special reference to the tribal people — that the tribal areas should develop democratically according to their own culture and tradition. I want to make friends with them, to help them without any feeling of superiority because we are not superior to them in many ways. I have seen age-old customs prevailing here which are worth copying throughout India. I should like the life of



India to be one of unity. But, of course, that does not mean that the variety and diversity in the lives of the people of India should cease to continue. I do not want to standardise the whole of India. I want India to be rich and variegated in culture with common links of friendship, unity and cooperation and not compulsion. Free India is bound to be a federation of willing units, not of unwilling units. The large number of units of autonomous areas should develop their respective cultures according to their own likings.

## 11. The Need for Revolutionary Changes<sup>1</sup>

I came to Calcutta about three weeks ago and in between went away to Assam for a few days. Tonight I am leaving Calcutta and I do not know when I shall come back again. Some days back I had addressed one or two student meetings in Calcutta. I addressed the young budding engineers and technicians and I addressed young scientists and lawyers. You I take it are all those who are not lawyers, technicians or scientists.

I was told that I should address you in English for a change, and should give you something hot. I am afraid I am not used to spicy food, and though sometimes I might indulge in a language which perhaps is not very cool, normally I do not become heated while speaking. Indeed I find it difficult to deliver an oration. I have, through long practice, got over stage-fright when addressing a public meeting. I take the audience into my confidence and address them as though I have a nice chat with a group of friends.

It is curious that for some reason or other I attract large crowds. It just amazes me how during the last two or three weeks wherever I went enormous crowds gathered for no real reason. What they or you expect from me, I do not know, unless it is this that however unworthy an individual I may be, I am a symbol of something in your mind and heart and you honour that symbol, and not the individual. This may be the case. But even then I want to warn you against expecting excitement from my speeches. You are not likely to get it because my

1. Address to students, Calcutta, 22 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24 December 1945.



own mind is very different from that of a student, possibly yours. It is a mind which is continuously grappling with all kinds of problems, trying to understand them and often getting confused. You ought to know that it is not exactly the desire of a leadership to grapple with problems which are really difficult to understand. Therefore, I do not want to appear before you under any false pretence. At the same time, I do not think that a clear and undeviating leadership that you should have can be expected from a person who is a student. May be in crises I do not get excited. I rather like them.

I have been speaking so far about myself. I was telling you that I cannot get rid of, or I do not want to get rid of, the habit of looking at things from the point of view of students. Therefore, I feel akin to you in possibly many ways, though I believe that I am more experienced than many of you. I like to meet students and find how they feel about the India of tomorrow. It will be the students who will have to shoulder the heavy burden and what the India of tomorrow is going to be depends upon you and young men like you all over India.

Everywhere the young men are aflame with the desire to do something. But do you feel strong enough to shoulder heavy responsibilities when the door of opportunities opens out?

You have a big job before you — the job of winning independence. Naturally this is the first job. Yet somehow in the context of history this has been almost accomplished because in the present day world the British empire has ceased to exist. It may drag on a miserable existence for a little while, but you can take it from me that if it attempts to hold on, as it seems to be attempting, for a little while longer than a year or two, it will not redound to the good name or to the profit of the holders-on. They will suffer a miserable existence. And it is up to you to make this existence unbearably miserable if they seek to hold on.

We talk and think too much on legal and constitutional problems, because we have somewhat got into the habit of a legal mind. This is true of our middle classes, more specially in Calcutta, because in the old days the only profession open to an Indian was the legal profession in which many an Indian attained eminence. On account of this, the profession itself became popular. Many of us developed a constitutional outlook. Yet during the last 25 years we have tried to get rid of the legal approach. We have succeeded to a great extent. Even then people think too much of constitutional formulae to solve the problem of India. They tell us how complex and how difficult the problem is and that if you do something here you must do something there.

Of course the problem of India is complicated and complex. Any problem that concerns 400 millions of people is bound to be a complex and delicate one and yet I think there is no important problem in the whole world which is more straight and simple than the problem of India's freedom.

What is this problem? The details of its solution may be the job of the solicitors or politicians. But what is the dispute between India and England? It is very simple. The problem is that the people of India — leave out the past, although we cannot really leave out the past because our minds and hearts are full of the past, still leave it out and think of the present — want to get rid of British rule, and they are definitely going to get rid of British rule. Obstruction may, here and there, delay the process, but there is going to be no peace in India so long as India is not rid of British rule. It is an obvious fact. It is a patent fact. And once you accept it, everything else becomes quite simple.

Suppose England for once accepts the Quit India Resolution of the Congress. You can take it from me that all the present difficulties and problems will end. They tell us: Oh we are prepared to give India freedom. As a matter of fact we are not asking for freedom, we are asking them to go away. No nation has ever got its freedom from another person. And India is not going to get freedom from the British. If there is any real stuff in her, India will get her freedom herself. If not, all the gifts of the world will not help her in getting freedom. I do believe that we have that stuff or human material with which we can raise the fine structure of India's freedom. But whether we have it or not, I am not prepared to submit to the infinite degradation of British rule. It is not upto the British or the American to ask me the stupid question whether India has the capacity of self-rule. It is sheer impertinence for anybody to try to measure my competence of self-rule. The presumption of any person who tells me whether India or any other country is fit for self-rule is to me tremendously impertinent and improper. Once you put that question, it is easy to put the other question whether that quarrelsome continent of Europe is fit for self-rule or for a slaughter-house. Every few years they have waged wars. These are not signs of wisdom.

But I am not criticising. Europe has shown very fine and great qualities and there is much to learn from Europe and America. It is foolish to run down any country and it is also foolish on the part of other countries to run down our country.

Look at another aspect of the Indian problem — the scarcity of every necessary thing of life — food, clothing, education, housing etc. You can consider it in the governmental way by looking into files for the reasons,



or you can consider it from the point of view of money you have to spend. There are many ways of considering this matter. You may conclude, as the Government of India invariably does, that the Government does not have the finances or something else to meet the crisis. Therefore, a few millions of people can starve and die as they did in Bengal, therefore, tens of millions of Indians can go naked, therefore, for 100 years or more 90 per cent of India may remain illiterate, and therefore, most of the villages may remain in insanitary conditions.

The other day a fine education report, called popularly the Sargent report,<sup>2</sup> was produced. It was based, as you may remember, largely on the scheme of education which the Congress ministries started eight years ago. Now this report for a long time, for a year or more, has been lying with the Government and from what I hear the Government has come to the conclusion that it is too expensive to educate Indian children. As it costs much money the report is going to be shelved. This is the reply that is given to everything in India. The only thing which is not expensive apart from wars — for war you will have to find money anyhow — is the Indian Civil Service, the Viceroy, the Governors and other high officials who live in India. Though some of them may do some good some time or other, they are mostly sponging on India. It is an astounding and scandalous thing to see the difference, not merely between high English and Indian officers, but also between the people at the top and those at the bottom of the scale. It is tremendously astounding, fantastic and amazing.

There are, indeed, many ways of considering the question of Indian poverty, education, etc. On the way a war is waged. When war comes, nobody goes about saying that you have not got the money. It does come. May be the future generations will suffer for it. The war is a process of destruction and of construction. Yet when the question of reconstruction comes up which is an investment for the future, the money is not found.

I did not have a chance, as I was a student of science, to study Indian economics. When I came back to India I learnt the first lesson in Indian economics during my visit to the villages. The more I went to them and saw the famished people the more I was filled with anger. I got a picture of Indian economics which no book could give me. The sight of stark hunger, tremendously low standard of life, pretty little girls and boys unkempt and hungry, filled me with fierce rage. When 100 millions of people are suffering something must be done. It is not

2. Sir John Sargent, Educational Adviser to the Government of India, formulated a plan to make India literate in 40 years at the cost of Rs. 312 crores.



a matter which can be solved by merely shouting slogans. It is an intolerable situation. No man has a right to draw high salaries or heavy dividends and live in palaces in Calcutta or Bombay, if he does not do his utmost to raise the poor.

I may confess what has been my one moving urge in politics. I am not a politician as you perhaps know. Politics irritates me. Normally speaking the ways of politics do not appeal to me. But the Indian politics of today at any rate — I do not know what the future will be like — has still an idealistic element which appeals to me. Therefore I have entered politics in spite of the fact that I am not a politician in the professional or the literal sense of the word. Politics in India, fundamentally considered, is not getting elected to the council. It is a question, first of all, of the freedom of India, and secondly, of ending poverty by rapid economic advancement. It is a politics of revolutionary changes. It does not mean necessarily violent changes, the throwing of bombs or the shooting of men. Throwing of bombs sometimes is a counter-revolutionary act. A revolutionary change is that which brings about a revolution in the conditions of life and not shooting a person down, although the shooting down of a person may bring about a revolution occasionally.

But that is a different matter. We want revolutionary changes that will produce this condition. Politically, of course, we want a revolutionary change in India. But we want it more in the social and economic life of India. We want all these and unless we effect them, I believe, we shall have fearful catastrophes such as the Bengal famine.

There is a time element in it as well. All these changes have to be brought about rapidly. You cannot wait. Sometimes the people talk to me about the complexities of our problems. Let us wait, they say, for a few years when perhaps passion may come down, and we may settle down. Perhaps even Mr. Jinnah may come down and take a more reasonable attitude. This is a hope which few people may share. All these talks come from people who are comfortable in society, whether it is the English or the Indian. Unfortunately it is either an intellectual or an emotional feeling and it is not related to the daily life of those who suffer continuous misery. When you get down to these downtrodden classes, who are in continuous misery, their desire to better their conditions is not intellectual or just emotional but a passionate striving to get out of the pit in which they are sunk. Are you going to tell the starving to wait for another month or year to give them food? It is absurd. Your approach is from the angle of the upper class — persons who are comfortably well-to-do, who eat well, sleep well and generally do well in life and who may have some humanitarian sympathy.

The poor can hardly have this urge. Even I cannot have this urge although I am talking in this fashion. We cannot have the urge which the poor really have, men who do not know what tomorrow will bring to them, whether starvation, death, illness or some other form of insecurity which always dogs them. Life is a burden to them. I do not know how they live or die in the process. You who call yourselves revolutionary cannot understand that urge which comes from hunger because if hunger comes too near, then you become lifeless individuals or have life in you just to carry on a routine existence. As regards the Bengal famine, the question which amazes me is how a vast number of people could die without rebelling, without doing something and without hitting out. Why should a man die like a rat in a hole? How many millions of people in Bengal—I am not blaming those poor wretches who had been reduced by starvation for not days but years, and by semi-starvation sapping their energies and vitalities—are there dragging on a miserable existence?

So I want you to understand your politics and economics with a sense of reality, not as vague theories from books. Of course, you have to learn from books without which you cannot appreciate many values of life. But you have to learn other things from day to day happenings in your factories and fields. There have been occasions when some students came to me and asked silly questions about students and politics. Well, obviously as students, their job is to study, as otherwise they are not students. A student is to study and train himself for the future. If he does not study all the enthusiasm in him will not bring him that specialised knowledge—that can be acquired only by being a student. You will have to build a bridge between enthusiasm and specialised knowledge. Does it strike you that the job of politics also requires some study?

Remember while you are thinking, as you must think, of today's struggle and of the question of freedom. You will have to face several other problems tomorrow. You will have to shoulder the burden of a free India. Free India will not merely require men for odd jobs here and there, but will require large numbers of trained people. Apart from other purposes, we shall require thousands of trained people for diplomatic assignments. When India is free we will have ambassadors, ministers and consuls in other countries. While you participate in the activity of the day, you are to be prepared for tomorrow, when you will have more serious activities of different types. Do not lose sight of that, otherwise you will prove a misfit when that time comes. Meanwhile, cultivate discipline as much as you can.



## 12. Nationalism and Internationalism<sup>1</sup>

It does not require any insistence on your part to bring me here for the pull of Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati is strong, and whether I come here frequently or not, often my thoughts come here.

During the last six months I have been thinking of coming here. But various happenings prevented me. Curiously enough there was a feeling of hesitancy in me when I was specially invited to preside over the gathering. For I did not know whether I was entitled in any way to speak on the ideals which Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati embody. But in any way this is not reason enough for me to fail to come. The other pull — the pull of your affection — is very strong and so I have come here.

Three weeks ago I came to Bengal and in between I went to Assam. During these three weeks I had a strenuous time and I may tell you that the first time when I have had a little rest and peace of mind was since 10 o'clock this morning. The brief night rest has refreshed me. This in itself is a reminder to me of what Santiniketan was and is. As I lay in my bed this morning thinking of the stress and the memory of Gurudeva and my previous visits here, of all that Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati stand for, it seemed to me that in so many ways it is not an answer to any of my problems, because answers do not come this way but through an attempt at the solution of some of the major problems, not of India but of our age. There may be differences of opinion, I suppose, on what these major problems are, but many of them are there on which most of us will agree.

One of them is the relative importance of nationalism and internationalism. Now it is obvious that nationalism by itself, unconnected with some wider concept, is a narrow creed. It is also obvious that without nationalism we are rootless. We just have no deep roots anywhere. On the other hand internationalism is not only good but essential in the world today. And yet some kind of vague internationalism, without definite contacts and bonds with nationalism, is almost an airy nothing. How to combine the two? What are the essential features of the two? And what are the conflicts between the two? Apparently there are, though possibly in reality there are not. You know in the past many years internationalism has grown as life's activities have tended that way with the increase not only of

1. Convocation address at Viswa Bharati University, Santiniketan, 24 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25 December 1945.



rapid communication, but with the growth of almost everything that we see around us today.

So people think that nationalism is something fading off and giving place to internationalism. We see internationalism in many aspects, even in the activities of what I might call proletarian elements of the world. On the other side of the scale we see internationalism developing perhaps more concretely, though with less shouts in the realm of finance, trade and commerce and cartels, and in between we see this internationalism in the development of science, in the new commerce of ideas, in so many ordinary things which meet us at every turn of the road, the radio, cinema etc.

People think that internationalism is obviously the thing of the future, and nationalism must fade away. And there is a great deal of truth, I suppose, in this and yet whenever a country or the world faces a crisis, nationalism becomes immediately dominant. We have had a very big crisis during the last five or six years of the world war. One of the lessons of this crisis is how, when deeply stirred, the people turn to nationalism immediately. Every country that was involved in this war became tremendously nationalistic. It forgot its internationalism. Even in cases of countries with proletarian bias, which thought and believed in terms of internationalism and workers of the world holding together against other elements oppressing them, nationalism is intensely a dominant passion.

In spite of this development of internationalism all over the world, which is an inevitable development influencing human life, man's mind continues to function to a very large extent, especially in times of crisis, on a nationalistic basis. So, I suppose, one of the problems of today and tomorrow is how to fit in these two conceptions — nationalism and internationalism. Nationalism obviously is something deep down in human nature. We cannot uproot it and there is no reason why we should try to uproot it, because nationalism ultimately depends on all that is best in us.

How can we get rid of it without cutting off ourselves from our deep moorings? If we do it we would probably become superficial. But why should nationalism come into conflict with internationalism? I find attempts are being made at Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati to combine the two. Your attempts may not find a perfect solution, but even groping towards a proper answer and succeeding in some measure in this attempt to my mind is a great achievement.

Then again there is another aspect, the proper integration of the old and the new. Here again we belong to the old, each one of us wedded to the old, or rather it would be more correct to say, we would prefer

to say, we do not belong to the old but rather the past belongs to us. To belong to the old means that we are old but the old belongs to us means that we have it in us and yet we are in the present looking forward to tomorrow. This integration of the past and the present and the future is again a difficult problem. It is extraordinary that many of us who live in the present are hardly conscious of it, but wrapped up in the past. Now the past is not enough, although the past is an absolutely essential thing for the present. Man's life changes as everything changes in this world from day to day, from hour to hour. But, curiously enough, man's mind does not change. Always there is a lag, the mind remains tied up in the face of changes all round. It may be that it is one of the causes of lack of integration and of many of the conflicts of today. So while holding on to the past we have to hold on and keep changing and understanding the changes of the present and so fit in ourselves for the future. In ancient countries like India and China, where we have a tremendous cultural tradition which inspires and sometimes pulls us back, the need for a proper integration of the past with the present and the future becomes even more important.

There is perhaps today, more so than in the past, the necessity for greater integration between the outer life and the inner life of man. The absence of integration leads to all problems and upsets. Seldom, I suppose, has life all over the world lacked in poise as it is today. We may develop extraordinary equilibrium and poise but persons, more especially in the highly industrialised countries of the world, have no inner equilibrium. Now, this may or may not be the necessary consequence of industrialisation as such, but it has been a consequence of the kind of life that has resulted from it. In our own case in India, there is also this want of integration, not because of industrialisation but because of many other reasons. Obviously unless there is harmony between the outer life and the inner life, man is a battle ground most of the time.

It seems to me that Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati tackle all these problems and try to solve them in some way. As I said, perfect solution is perhaps difficult or almost impossible of achievement in this world of ours, but it is something that fills one with hope that there should be a place which at any rate thinks of these problems, considers them and tries to solve them to the best of its ability. But the fact that you have become symbols and emblems of those who try to solve these problems is in itself a measure of the achievement of Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati. It is not for me to say anything of the inspiration of Gurudeva here because the whole place is full of him. Since I came here last, three and a half years ago, you have grown and you will now continue to grow. You will add many buildings, you have built a new



hospital and your activities have extended in every direction. It is pleasing. But the real question you have to ask yourselves does not concern constructing more buildings or hospitals but it concerns how far you have been able to imbibe and translate in your activities the ideals and spirit of Gurudeva in vibrant reality. They flourish here of course, but it is always a little difficult, when a towering and dominant personality has been removed from us, to keep close to the ideals which he represented. Other factors come in. Nevertheless it is a measure of the greatness of the individual that his influence continues for ages and I have no doubt that that influence will continue here in Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati for ages to come.

You will pardon me if I say that to me this place is not a mere replica of great educational institutions in this country or elsewhere in the world. There are far finer buildings and far greater resources elsewhere, but this place has a character. I hope that you will never lose its character. You sit here in this mango grove. I would rather wish that you think of the simple and artistic ways which have been introduced here under Gurudeva's guidance and with the help of his colleagues. The future generations should not forget these and ape some of the pompous methods of bigger institutions.

It is good to have come here even for a short while. It is good especially for me who leads a curious and abnormal life which is not much to my liking, but somehow or other some kind of faith pulls me in this and that direction and I have to submit to it. But perhaps when I am rushing about, when I am speaking when silence might be golden, the memory of Santiniketan is like a fresh breeze that cools the mind and a visit to this place especially is something that stands out as an oasis in the desert of political existence. So I thank you for this opportunity.

To those many students who have received their degrees today, I would only say that you have just now participated in a very beautiful way and I hope you will remember the ideals inculcated in you and the pledge you have taken in apt language. Wherever you may go you will, in some measure, carry the message and represent the spirit and the ideals of Santiniketan.



### 13. Warning against Dogmas<sup>1</sup>

There was something elemental in the 1942 movement in which Bihar and its students played an important part. The movement was the spontaneous manifestation of a spiritual urge. It was like a storm that blew over the face of the country and was just as much a natural force, like the flood which cannot be checked any more than a storm can be checked. Just after passing the Quit India Resolution, the Government arrested all the leaders. The news of their arrests spread like wild fire and it was thought to be an onslaught on national dignity. The urge to rebel spontaneously came from within. Out of this rebellion, people came out stronger and victorious.

Possibly, if the leaders had not been imprisoned the movement would have taken a different shape. But in the absence of their leaders what can the people do but be guided by their own judgment. They assumed the leadership and acted according to the circumstances. In the aftermath of such a movement certain events were bound to occur, which would not be wholly approved of. It shows, nevertheless, that the masses had grown much less tolerant of foreign rule and that they would not see their country humiliated if they could at all prevent it.

The mass upheaval had some meaning behind it. It could not have taken place unless there was something wrong with the Government. In fact, the movement was the result of collective injustices and malpractices. The repressive measures adopted by the Government were just as singular as the movement itself. There was no parallel to it in history after 1857. The Government was faced with a people who were determined to sacrifice their all to uphold the honour of their country. The people were perfectly justified in their rebellion, and if they had faltered they would have lowered India's name. Had the people then submitted to the British outrage our hearts would have bled. I am glad that the people revolted. But the British Government was a mighty force and could not be brushed aside.

However, it was a hundred per cent popular movement although many individuals showed no mature judgment. Therefore it cannot be judged by ordinary standards. It cannot be weighed in the scale of legal

1. Address to the Bihar Provincial Students' Conference, Patna, 24 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 December and *The Hindu*, 26 December 1945.

jurisprudence, but must be judged at the bar of public opinion. The court cannot be the judge of our freedom struggle which spontaneously came forth from the masses. The masses only can judge the rightness of such a struggle. The movement could not have succeeded without inner strength. Here is food for thought for the students. The day is not far off when the strength of the Congress will make the British leave India. Swaraj must come by virtue of our strength. What you require is organisational strength. This the Congress has achieved for you to a great extent. Its policy during the last 25 years has surely strengthened the moral fibre of the people. The Congress has received many knocks and blows and suffered many setbacks in the course of its chequered career, but it has always emerged stronger after withering all opponents.

While the plans, the programmes and the activities of the Congress are all open, straightforward and above board, political strategy sometimes justifies even conspiratorial or underground activities. But what the students should guard against is devoting their energies to anything which does not promote the interests of the masses.

I want you to learn from the 1942 movement and to benefit by the mistakes that you might have made. You must carefully ponder over the issues that face you before plunging into action, though mature deliberation is not quite natural to you. I encourage you to have academic discussions on political matters, but warn you against taking the initiative in the political field. You must look for guidance from the accepted political party which is the Congress. Meanwhile, you will have to prepare yourselves for taking your due part in the India of tomorrow. In the next few years you will be expected to make momentous decisions involving the future of the country.

Today the air is filled with "isms", mostly imported from other countries, and young people are easily carried away by one or the other slogan without understanding its significance properly or caring to find out how far it suited the needs of their country. There are the Socialists and the Communists who talk a great deal about the masses. I warn the students against being doctrinaire and dogmatic about anything. Various concepts and ideals have been imported from other countries and grafted on to the Indian soil without adjusting them to Indian conditions. Trade unionism is one such ideal and Marxism another. The Communist slogan, "Workers of the world unite", is meaningless. What is required is to adapt it to the conditions prevailing in our country. It is difficult to catch up with events which move faster than their theoretical bases. The industrial revolution upset many accepted doctrines,



but in its turn it could influence the French Revolution which dominated the mind of many countries in the 19th century. It gave a fatal blow to the feudal system. Similarly Marxism has also its appeal and attraction but it is not adopted by the entire world. Fascism, vitally opposed to other creeds, held complete sway in certain countries.

Political and economic doctrines have to be adjusted to suit the local conditions of a country; also they have to be viewed against an international background, for many countries of the world are now tending towards a closely knit relationship. The atomic bomb is the biggest development in the world and is capable of changing the entire shape of the world. Students should ponder over these developments and fit their ideas and actions to a larger framework.

Shouting slogans will lead you nowhere. While I approve of revolutionary ardour, you must control your emotions by strict discipline. India is going through a crucial period and the future is full of dynamic possibilities. You should not lose sight of your ideal.

#### 14. Fear Complex in India<sup>1</sup>

The problem in India is that the people are seized with a fear complex, the fear of continuation of British rule, the fear of Hindu-Muslim disunity, the fear of domination and oppression of the minority by the majority communities.

Students should not mix themselves with party politics. External party politics should not reflect on their activities as students. India needs thousands of engineers, doctors and scientists for the reconstruction work and in this specialised world of today the country cannot afford to ignore this aspect. Students must equip themselves for the task ahead. Politics is also a specialised subject and it needs training on the part of the participants. World affairs are not conducted by mere passing of resolutions and making speeches, but by action. The student movement must work with the broad ideology of independence and of uplifting the masses. There should be no narrow ideological grouping.

1. Address to students, Karachi, 10 January 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 January 1946.



If students identify themselves with various parties, the student movement will cease to be a movement.

### 15. Vindictive Actions Against Students<sup>1</sup>

There has been continuing trouble and conflict in some colleges in the U.P. resulting in student strikes and subsequent punishment to them. I have refrained from expressing any opinion about these occurrences as I did not know all the facts and much of my time was spent outside the province. But recently there has been victimisation and extraordinarily heavy and wholesale punishments have been given to a large number of students. In particular, the action taken against the students of Bareilly College can only be described as vindictive and fantastic. The students of the Agriculture College of Cawnpore have also been victimised and punished although at one stage the principal had previously agreed to their request.<sup>2</sup>

Now apart from the merits of the case, an educational authority which imposes such punishments on large numbers of students has little real authority or moral sanctions left. It is absurd to carry on education in this way and the sooner this absurdity is righted the better.

One of the frequent causes of the dispute appears to be the functioning of the students' unions. For these unions a compulsory levy is made on the students. Strangely enough, this levy continues to be made for years, as is the case of the Agricultural College, even when the union was suppressed and not allowed to function. I am decidedly of opinion that instead of these compulsory unions there should be voluntary unions of students, where they can function as they will. This will avoid the raising of many controversial issues.

The immediate issue affecting large numbers of students is, however, the punishment awarded, including expulsion and fines. These should immediately be withdrawn, and a proper atmosphere created for the functioning of the institutions. The question of the unions can then be considered on the basis I have suggested.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 13 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 14 January 1946.
2. Students of the Bareilly College and the Kanpur Agricultural College went on strike following the refusal of the authorities to revive the college unions. This resulted in the expulsion of student leaders.

16. To D.P. Bhattacharya<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
February 2, 1946

Dear Mr. Bhattacharya,<sup>2</sup>

I am in receipt of your letter of the 24th January. I have also read the other papers that you have sent me. I do not propose to go into the numerous abnormal occurrences<sup>3</sup> which have taken place in Bareilly College during the last few months. I have received many reports of them; and, as I have said above, I have also read the papers you have sent me. It is not my function to act as a judge of all these occurrences apportioning blame or credit to the various parties. Nor have I the time to go into these matters in detail. But there are some broad factors of the situation which have pained me. I have no doubt that many of the students of the Bareilly College acted irresponsibly and occasionally showed a lack of discipline. But the way the Board of Control and some of the officers of the college have dealt with the situation seems to me not only deplorable but to demonstrate an unfitness for the charge of dealing with and training young people. It is manifestly absurd to punish large numbers of students, amounting to hundreds, by fines and in some cases by rustication, which in itself shows that the management is incapable of controlling the students body or inspiring any confidence in them. It is no excuse to say that there are certain ancient rules according to which these fines and expulsions have been inflicted.

Every teacher knows or should know that the student world today is in a highly excitable state and is influenced greatly by the political ferment in the country. I have tried my best, in common with others, to lead them away from sporadic action which interferes with their studies and produces psychological ferment in their minds. But my way has been of sympathetic approach and of understanding their troubles and their grievances. Even when they go wrong the approach has to be sympathetic. In other countries students often get excited and even misbehave, but their misbehaviour is condoned because much has to be forgiven to youth. The way of punishment and of treating students as a hostile body is recognised to be fundamentally wrong. It is totally immaterial as to what rules are broken when the relationship between

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Principal, Bareilly College, Bareilly.

3. Bareilly College was closed on 15 January 1946 following the agitation of students for three months against the principal.



the teachers and professors and their students has become completely abnormal and is based on threats and punishment. Education cannot be organised on these lines and any attempt to do so means a complete failure of the educational authorities. The series of occurrences in Bareilly College have been extraordinary and reflect no credit on the Board of Control or some of the teachers. They show how things should not be done. A small incident mismanaged grows to major proportions and upsets not only the students but the public generally. Courts intervene. A notable citizen of Bareilly, Pandit Dwarka Prasad, who is unfortunately no more, takes a prominent part. The Commissioner of the Division, who both by virtue of his office and his past unsavoury record as an official is very unpopular, plays a leading role. All this is about as far removed from the education of the young as anything can be.

It may happen that by sheer compulsion and threats of punishment a number of students may be cowed down while a number continue to maintain a rebellious attitude. Usually the more vital and promising students are the more aggressive in such matters and the submissive ones are the second-rate ones. It is the object of education to inculcate self-reliance and vitality. But in education as it is organised in India generally, and more specially in Bareilly College at present, submissiveness in the name of discipline is supposed to be the highest virtue. Obviously any popular authority would reverse this process and, while maintaining discipline, encourage in every way the vital elements in the student world. Today the authorities are as far removed from popular control as they can be, but a time may come when this is not so and a different approach will have to be made.

It must be remembered that students are generally immature and are swept away by sentiment. When this sentiment is in line with national sentiment it becomes powerful and only some one in sympathy with that national sentiment can deal with those students effectively and without injury to them. After all the young men and women in our colleges and schools are the real wealth of the nation. We have to look after them with affection and sympathy, to tend them carefully, to allow them to grow into mature citizens, as a plant grows, without too much compulsion. So far as I can see there has been no realisation of this by the authorities of the Bareilly College, with the result that public sentiment in this province is almost unanimously opposed to those authorities and to the methods they have adopted. The sooner, therefore, these methods are changed and a new approach is made the better for all concerned.

I am prepared to use such influence as I possess with students to bring them round to a disciplined and orderly development of the individual



and the group. But my influence can only be exercised through affection and a friendly approach. It can only have effect when the hostile approach from the other side ceases, and an atmosphere is created which soothes and not irritates. I can be no party to anything which, in the name of discipline, tries to humiliate the pride and spirit of our young people. I like that pride and spirit for out of that only we can build up a self-reliant India.

I suggest to you that it is up to the college authorities immediately to retrace their steps and to withdraw all orders of rustication, expulsion, fine and other forms of punishment. Having done so a new atmosphere may be created in which other questions can be considered in a more amicable and friendly manner.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 17. The Volunteer Movement of the Congress<sup>1</sup>

There have been considerable obstacles in the development of the volunteering movement of the Congress.<sup>2</sup> During the early stages of the war, some restrictions on drill, parade etc., were imposed to avoid volunteers being mistaken for the military. There was some justification for such a course. The principle behind such restrictions might be right, but the manner in which orders are now being executed is wrong. In Europe, during the war, people had to receive training in drill, discipline etc., but in India, boys and students cannot receive training even in drill. This is a very bad policy. It demonstrates the difference between the administration in Europe and the administration in India. It is surprising that objection is taken to Congress volunteers going even in files.

1. Address to Congress volunteers, Allahabad, 3 February 1946. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 4 February, *National Herald*, 6 February and *The Hindustan Times*, 6 February 1946.
2. Volunteer training was banned in Allahabad under the Central Government Camp and Parade Order. In Amritsar, 45 Congress volunteers were arrested on 30 December 1945 for marching in military formation in violation of the Defence of India Rules.

It means that preference is given to their going in a disorderly fashion over their marching in an orderly manner. Whatever the Congress does makes the bureaucracy nervous and suspicious. But there should be a limit to official narrow-mindedness. On the one hand, we hear tall talk of their doing this thing and that thing in connection with our demand for independence; on the other, they cannot tolerate even volunteer training for the people.

About fifty to sixty thousand volunteers have been trained in the country by the Hindustani Seva Dal. We wished to train lakhs of volunteers, as we wanted to have trained men in every village to discipline others, but due to war the movement could not make the desired progress.

The present policy of the Congress is not to launch civil disobedience. We do not want to do, from our side, anything of the nature of satyagraha. But we can make ourselves helpless by not going even in files. If such is the nature of the order it must be ended soon. It should be made clear that worthless orders, which cannot be accepted by any people with self-respect, cannot be accepted by us.

We need volunteers, not to raise an army, but for the service of the people. Secondly, the movement can improve discipline and morale, which in turn will improve the capacity of the people to work. We have seen in the past few years that young men do not lack in enthusiasm. What is wanted is discipline. The lack of discipline eclipses many a virtue. Discipline is therefore very essential. If I have my way, I would like every man, woman, girl and child of India, to be trained in discipline and taught volunteering. This will increase their fitness for work in any line.

Volunteering is, therefore, a very important part of the Congress programme of work but much progress in this direction has not been possible due to the obstacles. It is not enough if we have 100, 200 or 300 volunteers. There should be thousands of volunteers. Every *muhalla* should have volunteers.

A revolution is bound to take place in India. We should be prepared for controlling the situation when the expected change comes. The foundation of the present system has become hollow. When the old system shakes, many other things will receive a shock. It will then be time to see that we act with wisdom so that we may not also be shaken.

The system of our work and that of the British Government are quite different. The Government wants to control us by means of the police and the armed forces. If we are to manage our affairs, we would do so with the cooperation of the people. Therefore, we have to strengthen

our *sangathan* with the cooperation of the people and should not involve ourselves in quarrels with our own people. In a free India, all will be living together happily and peacefully.

What method the people of a free India will consider best, I cannot say. But considering the present situation in India, the peaceful and nonviolent method of the Congress is the best.

The next few months are very important. The question of the formation of ministries and many other important problems may come up before us. The present conditions may undergo considerable changes. We should be prepared to face these problems peacefully. The Azad Hind Volunteers' Organisation<sup>3</sup> should follow its parent organisation, the Congress. The Congress has grown much in power, but with its growth, some weakness has also crept into the organisation. There are internal petty factions, which are most dangerous when the country is faced with a revolution. Congressmen should, therefore, keep themselves aloof from petty politics.

3. The Congress had formed, under Shah Nawaz Khan, an All-India Azad Hind Volunteer Corps, one of whose aims was to prevent communal disturbances.

## 18. Grow Big to Do Big Things<sup>1</sup>

My good wishes to the provincial session of the Students' Congress to be held at Dehra Dun. Seldom have the students of India faced such problems as they face today. They will require all their courage, wisdom and sobriety to deal with them. Above all, discipline and restraint are necessary, lest we waste our energy over trivial matters. Big things are ahead and we have to grow big in order to meet them and mould them according to our wishes.

1. Message to Students Congress. *National Herald*, 7 February 1946.



## 19. Real Life is in the Villages<sup>1</sup>

The present prizes are nothing in comparison to the future prizes in store for you. Many opportunities will be available to get the real prizes. There should not be empty enthusiasm and empty slogans, but there should be a substantial real life among you.

Real life is to be found in villages where the people are half-naked and get very little food to sustain themselves. I emphasise the need of learning and developing a technique in everything. The victory of the Allies was due merely to their superior technique of war and the inventions of American scientists. I appeal to you to develop a technique in everything.

We should always think about the welfare of the forty crores of Indians. We should get rid of slavery and march to our cherished goal. Our problems are numerous and they have been further increased by the foreign government. They have to be solved.

I request the university authorities to open the door of learning to all irrespective of caste, creed and sex. Poverty and social restrictions have been the cause for many people to have remained uneducated. Many great lives have been lost in frustration, unhonoured and unsung. Had everyone got ample opportunities to study from childhood, he would have contributed much more to the country. I recall the will made by Rabindranath Tagore some months before his death. He had stated that the British would leave India bankrupt for our children.<sup>2</sup> I stress the need for the abolition of the zamindari and the capitalist systems. They have hindered the progress of our struggle. The university should impart education which will help the country to develop as a first class nation.

1. Address to the students of Science College of Benares Hindu University after prize distribution, Varanasi, 14 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 16 February 1946.
2. The last public declaration of Rabindranath Tagore on 14 April 1941, three months before his death, has been considered his last testament. He said: "The wheels of Fate will some day compel the English to give up their Indian empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their centuries' administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth will they leave behind them. I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. And today when I am about to quit the world that stubborn faith has gone bankrupt altogether."

You should adopt the constructive programme of Gandhiji in order to develop discipline. I congratulate the people who participated in the 1942 movement, specially the university students, for they rebuffed the attack on the self-respect of their nation. It mattered little if they acted wrongly.

## 20. Keep Aloof from Party Politics<sup>1</sup>

The student movement in Western countries is non-political whereas in India it is linked with politics. This is the main defect of the student movement in India. Students should learn things with reference to reality. It will be better if they go to villages during their holidays and gain experience in field work.

Political leadership requires great experience and sober thinking. You should keep yourselves aloof from party politics, but nobody will prevent you from leading the people in extraordinary circumstances in the absence of the leaders. I discourage the adoption of a conspiratorial attitude, but under compulsion people might fall back on it.

I emphasise the need of improving the technique of doing a certain thing. Independence is quite near, for the progressive forces of the world are supporting our cause and the British Government's hold on us is declining. Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League are a hindrance in our march, but the days are not far off when they too will be defeated.

Violence will not bring Swaraj to us. No doubt, the course of our movement will be quite different in the future. The release of Shah Nawaz and other I.N.A. men was mainly due to the pressure of the Indian army and the Indian public. We have to bring the Indian army to our side. The Indian National Army trials have changed the outlook of the Indian soldiers and most of them have started thinking in our terms. It is improper to run down the demobilized soldiers and treat them scornfully. Swaraj can be wrested from the British Government

1. Address to workers of Benares Students Congress, Varanasi, 14 February 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 15 February and *The Leader*, 15 February 1946.

when the country is determined. The immediate need of the hour is that the country has to be rehabilitated and made self-supporting.

Question: Why did the country fail in the 1942 rebellion?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Obviously, except, of course, with the help of an army any such movement is bound to be defeated.

The basis of Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programme is to make villages self-supporting. I advise the student workers to work for the improvement of conditions in rural areas.

I warn you not to judge the average Englishmen by your knowledge of the British civilians in India. The British civilians are unscrupulous persons with a narrow outlook.



## THE CONGRESS AND THE COMMUNISTS



## 1. A Self-Contradictory Role<sup>1</sup>

Z.A. Ahmed: ... I shall take up your Bombay press statement.<sup>2</sup> Frankly speaking, I was much disappointed and hurt by what you said about the Communists in that statement. We could understand it if anyone else had said those things about us. You have known us for a long time. You also know the international Communist movement. And therefore when you say that we were "on the other side" and that we were virtually Soviet agents, we have a right to feel terribly aggrieved. I do not know what you had in mind when you said this, but the Communist-baiters are taking full advantage of your statement. They say that you have denounced us as an unpatriotic party. Excuse me if I say that you have been very unfair to us.

Jawaharlal Nehru: I did not mean that you identified yourself with the Government. What I meant was that at a critical time when there was a clash between the Government and the national movement, you were not on the side of the national movement. It is a difficult question whether at that time the course taken by the national movement was right or wrong. The fact, however, remains that you were not giving your support to the national forces in whatever they were doing. I did not mean to convey the impression that you were helping or supporting the Government in its repressive policy.

Ahmed: You said that our policy was determined by the Soviet foreign policy. This is virtually calling us Soviet agents in the country, which I am sure you will agree is not correct. This has also given a handle to those who have made anti-communism their main job in life.

JN: I did not in the least mean that you are agents of the Soviet Union here. My point was that consideration of defence, safety and

1. On 28 June 1945, Z.A. Ahmed discussed with Jawaharlal the relations between Congressmen and Communists. An unsigned copy of the report of the talks, submitted to the Communist Party of India by Ahmed on 4 July 1945, is available in the Archives on Contemporary History of India, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. Extracts from it are printed here.
2. See *ante*, pp. 15-21.



development of the Soviet Union exercises a great influence on Communist policies in all countries.

Ahmed: It is true that we attach tremendous importance to the safety, defence and development of the Soviet Union, much more than an average nationalist does. But we do so because we consider the Soviet Union as the most powerful bulwark against imperialism and in that sense its safety and defence are directly related to our national interests. But this is quite different from saying that our national policies are determined by Soviet foreign policy.

JN: My contention is that due to their attachment to the Soviet Union and other considerations of an international character, the political thought process of the Communists is different from that of an average nationalist. There are occasions when a purely nationalist attitude comes into conflict with the Communist attitude. The primary thing with the nationalist mind is immediate national interests, while with the Communists other considerations, one of the most important of which is the safety and defence of the Soviet Union, carry a great deal of weight.

Ahmed: But does our attitude strengthen the national interest or weaken it?

JN: Perhaps in the long run your attitude may prove to be more correct, but the fact remains that on certain immediate issues a conflict between the Communists and the national movement does come into existence. In 1942, the powerful hatred of the British swayed our people and moved them forward into a countrywide struggle. Your policy, on the other hand, influenced comparatively a very small section. You could not move millions. Inevitably there arose a sharp conflict between you and the national movement which has now raised huge barriers between the two.

Ahmed: But if we bend before backward forms of nationalism it would not take us anywhere.

JN: There is no question of bending before it. The fact has to be recognised that the national sentiment is extremely powerful. You cannot just ride roughshod over it. It has to be changed as a process and this takes time.

## 2. Anti-National Activity<sup>1</sup>

I am collecting facts about the happenings which took place after my arrest. I am also trying to know the reaction of the people. Conditions both in our country and abroad have changed considerably.

The Communists in the country have widened the gulf between the Congress and their own party. The need of the time is to organise and strengthen the Congress organisation and give up power politics.

In the U.P., the Executive has got all powers and acts in an impersonal manner. The office-bearers hold office only for one year. The members of the Congress Working Committee feel concerned over Punjab politics. The Punjab Congressmen should act according to my advice.

1. Address to Congress workers, Lahore, 17 July 1945. From *The Tribune*, 18 July 1945.

## 3. To R. Palme Dutt<sup>1</sup>

Gulmarg  
12 August 1945

My dear Palme Dutt,

... You must realise that it pains me to see the gulf that has arisen between the Congress and Communists in India. That gulf at present is wide and deep and has all the passions of three years behind it. That has nothing to do with communism and socialism, in favour of which there is considerable though rather vague sentiment. Still less has it to do with Russia for which there is great admiration, though no doubt tempered in many places by certain fears of present and future Soviet policy. The gulf has arisen because of internal policy in India and the fact that the Communists ran down popular leaders in India and, at a time when there was bitter conflict between nationalism and the imperialist structure, they appeared before the people as acting on the side

1. Palme Dutt Papers, London. Extracts.

of the latter. Whatever the inner motives and reasons, this public reaction is easy to understand. Politically the fact that has gone most against them and aroused the greatest resentment is their attitude on the communal question. They have become full-blooded supporters of Jinnah's demands (unspecified and vague as they are) and in the name of Congress-League unity they demand a complete surrender by Congress to Jinnah. I have no doubt that they have worsened the communal problem by their attitude. Communists who have joined the Muslim League appear to be more rabid Leaguers than others. All this has been greatly resented. I hope that changed circumstances will gradually tone down these differences.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 4. To Mohamed Yasin<sup>1</sup>

Gulmarg  
August 18, 1945

Dear Maulana Yasin,

I trust that all the arrangements for my visit to Lahore have been satisfactorily made. My programme stands as previously fixed. As I am anxious to have plenty of time at my disposal for talks with groups and individuals, I should like the 26th and 27th as free of other engagements as possible.

I have noticed in a *Tribune* report<sup>2</sup> that Akalis, Communists and Royists<sup>3</sup> as groups have been debarred from participation in the workers' meeting in Lahore. Royists of course have no place in the Congress at all as they have themselves left it and attacked it. As regards

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Those who opposed the Congress policy in 1942 and who did not go to jail in the August movement were not allowed to attend a meeting of the Congress workers arranged by the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee. Of 270 members of the Punjab P.C.C., 90 either belonged to the Communist Party or to the Akali Party.

3. The Royists were the members of the Radical Democratic Party started by M.N. Roy in 1940. This party supported the war effort unconditionally "out of political conviction."



the other two groups the question will no doubt be considered by the Congress Working Committee soon. I know perfectly well the strong feelings in Congress ranks against them for the part they played during the last three years. I have myself expressed my opinion in regard to this in public. Nevertheless it might raise difficulties at this stage if we treat them as excluded groups. I think I explained this to you when we met. I have consulted the Maulana also on this point and he agrees that it would be wiser not to exclude any group as such at this stage and before any final decision has been taken on this issue. The workers' meeting is likely to be a large inchoate body where any serious discussion will be difficult. But it will perform a useful function in giving me an idea of the position in the province and the feelings of the Congressmen in general. It will have to be followed by more concise talk with people. It will not matter much if certain persons, against whom Congressmen have grievances, form part of the large number invited to the main workers' meeting. On the other hand, to exclude a group as such may well lead to considerable waste of my time and the meeting's time in considering complaints and in discussing these very issues. I suggest, therefore, with Maulana Azad's approval, that no group as such should be excluded at this stage.

As for the future, we shall discuss this later and Maulana Saheb himself intends to visit Lahore on his return from Kashmir.

As I have to leave by the night train on the 27th for Delhi I want two second class berths reserved for me.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sardar Pratap Singh, the General Secretary of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 5. internationalism versus Nationalism<sup>1</sup>

I thank you for giving me an opportunity to meet you. I deplore the gulf created between the Communists and Congressmen. I know that the Communist Party included active sincere workers who have made

1. Address to communist workers, Lahore, 27 August 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 29 August 1945.

great sacrifices. The difference between the Communists and the Congressmen is of a vital nature which may be characterised as a conflict between internationalism and nationalism. I hope that efforts will be made to bridge the gulf that exists between them.

## 6. Charges Against Communist Members in the Congress<sup>1</sup>

Bombay  
Sept. 21, 1945

The A.I.C.C. office having received a large number of complaints and accusations against the activities of Communist members of the Congress and of the Communist Party in India generally in relation to the Congress, the Working Committee have referred this matter to us for examination and, if the facts so warrant, to frame charges to which the persons concerned might be invited to reply. There is a vast mass of papers and reports in the files before us. For the most part they are vague and sometimes irrelevant. Some of the charges, relating to individual or group activity, are serious, but they would require fuller examination and proof before any action could be based on them. We do not propose to take into consideration any of these vague and unproved assertions, or to initiate further inquiries in regard to them at this stage. As we understand the reference made to us, the Working Committee are concerned with the larger issues involved and not so much with individual misdemeanours. Under the Congress constitution and rules, it is open to provincial Congress committees or their executives to take disciplinary action against any individual Congressman or Congresswoman who has acted contrary to Congress policy. Such action, we are informed, has already been taken or recommended in certain cases by some provincial Congress committees. We propose, therefore, to consider only the broader aspects of the question in this report. It is not without significance, however, that complaints and accusations against Communist activity in India have been received from a very large number of Congressmen all over India. There is also no doubt that the attitude of the Communist Party towards the communal problem and their unqualified support of the Muslim League's claim for Pakistan have added to the prevailing estrangement. It is manifest that there is at present a widespread and deep sentiment against members of the Communist

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-23 (Part-1) 1945-46, pp. 79-97, N.M.M.L.



Party in India, and the Congress rank and file are powerfully influenced by it. We do not propose to allow ourselves to be guided by this sentiment in considering any action which might have to be taken.

The Congress has in the past kept its membership open to all individuals, classes, and religious and political groups in India, provided only that the objective of Indian independence was accepted, as well as the method of peaceful and legitimate action. Within that broad framework various ideologies have found their place even when they were not wholly in line with the governing ideology of the Congress. Even foreigners who accepted the objective and methods of the Congress could join it. Thus the Congress has been more of a movement than a narrow political party. It has, however, functioned as a party also, especially in the legislatures. Being an organisation which has indulged in militant action from time to time on an extensive scale, it has inevitably tended to function as a strictly disciplined organisation, even though it consisted of people with differing views on many political and economic matters. These two somewhat differing approaches — as a broad movement and as a disciplined party — have usually been reconciled by allowing full freedom of expression of views and opinions and at the same time insisting on uniformity in action, especially when that action meant a conflict with the British Government in India. In practice this meant freedom in discussing the policy to be laid down, and when that policy had been determined, to adhere to it as closely as possible, and certainly not to oppose it in any way. Without that strictness of uniformity in the field of action, the Congress would have faded away as a militant organisation and become an ineffective motley crowd pulling in different directions and wholly incapable of acting. Thus while different groups continued in the Congress, if any member of the Congress clearly acted against Congress policy, disciplinary action could be, and sometimes actually was, taken against him. This applied particularly to such Congressmen as were members of executive bodies within the organisation. It was manifestly absurd for a person to be a member of an executive committee when he or she did not accept the policy which that committee was supposed to further, or even opposed it.

Owing to the conflicts that have arisen between the viewpoints and policies of the Congress and various communal organisations in India, it was laid down in the Congress constitution some years ago that "no person who is a member of a communal organisation, the object or programme of which involves political activities which are, in the opinion of the Working Committee, anti-national and in conflict with those of the Congress, shall be eligible for election to any office or membership



of any elective Congress committee". Even in this case, it should be noted, members of communal organisations were not barred from joining the Congress as ordinary primary members; they were prevented from seeking office or membership of any executive.

The Communist Party in India came into existence in a very small way early in the twenties. It was for long an illegal organisation. A few of its members joined the Congress but the general attitude and policy of the party were to criticise, ridicule and condemn the Congress policy. The Congress, which had spread to the masses of the people and especially among the peasantry, and was in fact carrying on mass struggles on an unprecedented scale, was characterised as a bourgeois reactionary body trying to prevent mass urges from following their natural courses. In particular the Congress leadership was blamed for coming in the way of the masses. Official Congress policy was often held up to ridicule. In spite of this no action was ever taken against the Communists in India by the Congress, partly because they were so few in number and in influence that they did not count at all, and partly because they belonged to an illegal organisation which was being harassed and suppressed by the governmental authorities. The sympathy of Congressmen always went to all who suffered from Government's repressive policy. In 1929, when the Meerut trial took place, and many prominent Communists were involved in it, leading Congressmen helped in the defence.

Even in the early thirties the general attitude of the Communist Party of India towards the Congress did not change and was one of strong criticism and ridicule. In 1935-36, however, there was a change in the wider policies of the Communist parties all over the world and attempts were made in various countries to form 'Joint Fronts' and 'Popular Fronts'. It took some time for the Communist Party of India to be affected by this, and, indeed, it was resisted for a while, as it directly opposed the policy they had so far been pursuing. However, in 1936, the Communists in India became more friendly to the Congress, exhorted the people to join it, and tried to enter its local executives. From then onwards till the middle of 1939, that is for a little over three years, there was often much friction between the Communists and other elements in the Congress, but on the whole they functioned together and no major crisis arose. It should be noted that even this friction was in regard to internal and domestic policies in India, and seldom had anything to do with communism as such or with reactions to events in the Soviet Union. In the Congress there was a considerable body of opinion which was favourably inclined towards many of the aspects of

communism and socialism, as there were also many who did not approve of the philosophy underlying communism. In particular, the stress by Communists on violent methods was in conflict with the Congress policy of peaceful action. But in practice this did not usually lead to conflict in action, except occasionally in local areas. Usually this resulted in long and sometimes heated argument in A.I.C.C. meetings. A few Communists, not exceeding 2 or 3 per cent of the total membership of A.I.C.C., were elected to that body chiefly because of the system of voting by means of proportional representation (single transferable vote) which enabled small minority groups to be represented.

It should also be noted that within the Congress ranks there was widespread admiration for many of the achievements of the Soviet Union, though some of the policies pursued there were not uniformly admired.

This was the background when the war broke out early in September 1939. The Congress policy before and after this turning-point in world history is wellknown. It was defined at some length in a statement<sup>2</sup> issued by the Working Committee on September 14, 1939, and subsequently this led to the resignation of the Congress Governments in the provinces. The Communist Party of India, characterising the war as an imperialist war, bitterly attacked the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi for not launching a mass struggle immediately after the war began for the emancipation of India. The following extracts from *A Review on Gandhism* published by G. Adhikari<sup>3</sup> at the time of the Ramgarh Congress in March 1940, may be read with interest in the connection:

1. Once Gandhism held the fate of British rule in its hand.... Today it pursues the logic of "unconditional cooperation" with the same Government and that at a time when an unjust, imperialist and predatory war is raging in the world. Gandhism has entered into its decadent phase. At the most critical time of our national history it is acting as a fetter on the national struggle.
  2. Immediately on the outbreak of the present war Gandhiji declared that his sympathies were with England and France. He responded to the call of the Viceroy and interviewed him. To the angry demonstrators and correspondents, who resented his action, he replied: "I have come to the conclusion that it is Hitler who is
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 122-138.
3. (b. 1898); active member of the Communist Party of India; convicted in Meerut conspiracy case; arrested in 1934 for political activities; remained underground, 1939-42; editor for some time of *People's War* and later *People's Age*; member of the Central Committee of the C.P.I. for many years after 1948.



responsible for the war. If Hitler thought his claim to Danzig and the Corridor was just he should have submitted it to an impartial tribunal. Britain is fighting a just war. A satyagrahi must support a just cause even when it is espoused by an enemy." This is how nonviolence is invoked in support of an imperialist war. Gandhiji would not bargain with imperialism at this critical hour. He would not use England's difficulty to win India's freedom.... The popular feeling of 1939 on the other hand was violently against his stand and demanded the immediate resumption of the national struggle for freedom.

3. The results of the strategy of stalemate which has been adopted during the last six months are clear enough. Firstly, it will mean that the revolutionary vanguard is decimated in isolation through imperialist repression. Secondly, demoralisation would spread among the centre elements in the Congress and bring them to accept the position that no struggle is possible, Gandhiji's line is the best.... Shorn of its moral embellishment it is the line of the cowardly and compromising bourgeoisie.... Gandhism still retains its leadership in the national movement. It is seeking to use its position to overtake and imprison the rapidly growing forces of revolution, to isolate and eliminate them. It is paving the way for the most ignoble compromise and defeat at a time when all the factors are favourable for decisive victory over imperialism.

In the summer of 1940, the collapse of France and the *blitzkrieg* over England (*sic*) produced powerful reactions in India, and it was not considered desirable to start then the civil disobedience movement which had been envisaged in the Ramgarh Congress Resolution. In the autumn, however, the situation in the West was more stable, while in India conditions were rapidly deteriorating. In October 1940, the Congress initiated the individual satyagraha movement, controlled and conditioned by Gandhiji. Referring to this, the *Communist* of November 1940 wrote as follows:

"Human wit could not have drawn up any better rules for sabotaging all struggle and for dashing the national movement to pieces.... Every Congressman must be made to realise that this satyagraha can only lead to our prostration before the enemy.... That we have a national leadership that can offer such a plan is the supreme tragedy of the situation."

Again the *Communist* of February 1941 wrote:

"The national movement under bourgeois leadership has entered into a blind alley. They feared the masses and trusted imperial-



ism... They put their class above the nation... They hand over the national organisers to imperialism for safe custody. They dissolve the Congress organisation lest the people might use it as the instrument of a mass struggle."

And in March 1941, the *Communist* wrote:

"The struggle is a jolly merry-go-round. Shut up you irrelevant scoffer! It is a nation's solemn... nonviolent... suicide. In the phase of its decay Gandhism can only pursue an anti-struggle and compromising policy... The future under Gandhism is to lose all that the Congress has built up so far."

When in the summer of 1941 Nazi Germany attacked Russia there was widespread sympathy and anxiety for the Soviet Union all over India. The Communist Party of India naturally felt this all the more keenly but, in view of their past policy, it was not easy for them suddenly to change their whole attitude to the war. It took them many months to do so, but when the change came, it was a complete swing-over to the other extreme. The slogan of the "Imperialist War" gave place to one of the "People's War" and cooperation with Britain was urged. This was directly opposed to the Congress policy then and later and friction resulted from it. Soon after the Cripps negotiations the old ban on the Communist Party of India was removed by the Government and the Communist Party became a legal organisation in India. As such it carried on intensive propaganda for its new point of view, which brought it into direct conflict with Congress activities and propaganda. The Communist Party of India started a weekly, the *People's War*, to carry on this propaganda aggressively. Individual Communists who were members of Congress executives were thus placed in a very invidious position, and as they adhered to the Communist line, complaints against them began to mount up. There were some actual conflicts in public meetings, in Andhra especially, where it was alleged that Communists used violence. In some provinces, as in the U.P., disciplinary action was taken locally against Congress members of executives who were adopting the Communist line. All this was in June and July 1942, prior to August. Thus the position had already become difficult before the August Resolution was passed, and it was becoming increasingly clear that no person could or should be simultaneously a member of two executives with differing and hostile policies. In view of the vastness of the Congress organisation and the relative smallness of the Communist Party of India the problem was not, in a sense, of great importance, but it created a great deal of bitterness.

The resolution of the A.I.C.C., passed on August 8, 1942, was followed

by the arrest of a large number of Congressmen and other events which are well-known. Owing to governmental repression, spontaneous upheavals took place all over the country, hartals, strikes etc. and there was also a good deal of violence in some places. While it was clear that no movement had been officially started by the A.I.C.C. or Gandhiji, it was equally clear that this mass upheaval of unprecedented proportion was the direct consequence of the chain of events that preceded it. Undoubtedly it was a direct manifestation of the people's will, which the Congress had claimed to represent.

In this vast conflict between the forces of Indian nationalism and British imperialism, when people were being shot down by the thousand, and many of the horrors of war were being perpetrated on unarmed people in the towns and countryside alike, the Communist Party of India appeared to be lined up with the British Government in India. It is true that they mildly criticised British policy occasionally and asked for the release of the leaders, but they also condemned as traitors many Congressmen and Congress groups and carried on a virulent campaign against the people's movement. Whether the Communist Party's policy was right or wrong it is not for us to consider here. But there can be no doubt whatever that it was opposed to Congress policy and to that policy which had arisen spontaneously as a result of the people's movement. The two could not possibly be reconciled then or now. The *People's War*, in its various editions in different languages, carried out ceaseless propaganda against this people's movement in which nearly all Congressmen were involved in some form or other.

The *People's War* dated August 23, 1942, had the following:

"The call upon workers to go on political strike is not to exert pressure upon the British Government but to disrupt the country's advance and starve the workers for nothing. Continued production is a vital war necessity whatever the Government might be".

Again in the same issue we find the following:

"We Communists know that to keep production going is the workers' contribution to national defence and to keep transport running is to help to hit the fascist. We realise more seriously than others that there is no short cut to Indian freedom except the unity of our nation which will bring us national government; and not satyagraha nor sabotage, which can only destroy our national defence and open the gates to fascist invaders."

The following extract from Joshi's letter is significant:

"We gave up our strike policy because we consider it anti-national in the conditions of today, aiding the Jap aggressors on the one hand



and intensifying the economic crisis for our own people on the other. That we successfully prevented the Indian working class from resorting to strike even in a period of their worsening material condition is the measure not only of our influence over it but its capacity to understand national interests as its own." Further: "If you enquire into the *bona fides* of the persons who have written to you, you will find that they are those who organised or supported the post-9th August sabotage campaign or have been intensely prejudiced against us by these people. They are bitter against us because we oppose sabotage and exposed them not only in words but in practice."

The first meeting of the Communist Party was held in September 1942. Joshi and Adhikari wrote in the report submitted by them to their party that there were two groups in the Congress Working Committee:

"One, the anti-fascist group of Pandit Jawaharlal, Azad etc., and other, the group of Gandhiji, Patel, Rajendra Prasad and others, who wanted to bring British imperialism on its knees by creating a stand-still in centres of war production and in all means of communications. This group dominated in the Working Committee and so the cutting of wires and removal of rails etc., that took place in the disturbances were according to the ideals contemplated by Gandhiji's group."

Thus the responsibility for the August disturbances was placed by the Communists on the Congress Working Committee directly and positively in September 1942, long before the publication of Tottenham's pamphlet on the subject.

The following extracts are taken from the resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India passed at the same meeting:

"The path along which the present national upsurge is directed is one of national suicide, not of national salvation and freedom. It destroys the nation's indispensable defences, inevitably leading to conditions of civil commotion and disorder, anarchy, and even loot and arson. It makes the national movement the prey of bureaucratic provocation in the name of struggle. Finally, it creates a mass basis for fifth column activity in the name of patriotism. . . . It is leading the nation to a state of moral and political disruption and paralysis which, far from helping the people to get their freedom, can only clear the path of the invader. Such is the disastrous culmination of policies of not relying upon the strength of the people, that is, on national unity, and leaving the initiative in the hands of the imperialist bureaucracy."



Still more emphatic is the following:

"The central tasks to which the party must address itself today are threefold.... (b) carry on persistent political explanations among workers, kisans, student militants and Congressmen, how the present struggle leads to destruction and anarchy and is suicide."

Again:

"Our first and foremost task must be to re-establish firmly the leadership of the unions and the party in the industrial centres and stamp out the efforts of provocateurs and of misguided patriots to drag the working class into the suicidal campaign of sabotage and anarchy. Among the kisans we must conduct a sharp political campaign against these saboteurs and promoters of anarchy.

Among the students you must carry on a political explanatory campaign. We must explain to them that to pursue the policy of permanent strikes, to go in for destruction and anarchy is not to play their part in the freedom movement."

That the party faithfully carried out these decisions is borne out by a circular of the Government of India issued just a year later on 20 September 1943, from which the following extracts are given:

1. The party has as a whole exercised a restraining effect on students and its influence over the student community, though not great has, such as it is, been used in the direction of preventing student strikes and disorderly demonstrations.
2. Such influence as the party has with labour appears generally to have been exercised in the direction of opposing or minimising the effect of strikes.
3. In the party congress held in Bombay from 23 May to 1 June, 1943, there was an attack on the negative policy of the Congress and the resolution openly identified for the first time the Congress Socialist Party and Forward Bloc with the fifth column agents who are accused of taking advantage of the Congress resolution of August 1942, to lead the country to the brink of disaster.
4. Not only are the Communists almost the only party, which fought for victory.... they alone, however hesitantly, have criticised the Congress defeatism from a political point of view as opposed, for instance, to the fundamentally communal criticisms of Congress policy by the Muslim League etc., and have openly attacked as traitors the off-shoots of the Congress, the Forward Bloc and the Congress Socialist Party.

There are numerous reports from Congress committees alleging that the Communists had consistently condemned the August Resolution of the

Congress and Congressmen as responsible for all the disturbances which followed the August Resolution. They had similarly thrown their full weight on the side of the Government advocating unconditional support of the war effort and dissuading all classes whether peasants, workers or students from countenancing anything that might hinder the war effort or actually embarrass the administration. There are also many reports, made apparently after local investigation, showing that the Communists had been violently abusing and vilifying prominent Congressmen, and sometimes cooperating with the police in their activities against some Congressmen in the post-August 9th period. Numerous cases of rowdiness and hooliganism on the part of Communists in connection with meetings organised by or under the auspices of local Congress committees, especially in Andhra, are also mentioned in detail. Some of these cases are still the subject of inquiry and trial in some of the Madras courts. On the other hand, there are charges made by Communists against Congressmen. We have not gone into these charges and counter-charges. It would be difficult to arrive at exact and definite findings without elaborate inquiries, and, in any event, even if some local charge was proved, it will not follow that this was the result of the official policy of the Communist Party of India. There can, however, be no doubt that the Communists in the Congress, as well as those outside it, have ceaselessly opposed both in letter and spirit the Congress policy from early in 1942 onwards and especially since the Resolution of August 8, 1942.

There has been a prolonged correspondence between Gandhiji and Shri P.C. Joshi in regard to the activities of the Communists in the Congress and this has been recently published. At the suggestion of Mr. Joshi, the matter was referred to Shri Bhulabhai Desai for opinion: "You place your whole anti-communist file", wrote Joshi, "before any patriot of eminence who inspires mutual trust, for example, Mrs. Naidu, Rajaji or Bhulabhai. These are your old colleagues and known to us not to be prejudiced against us. Let me have a copy of the file and let them ask me for explanations on any point. I am sure after reading their report you will consign the anti-communist file to the flames." Mr. Desai tendered his opinion on the 20th of August last. In the course of his written opinion Mr. Desai states that "it is candidly admitted by Mr. Joshi that they regarded the European war which has just now ended as the People's War for the reasons he had given." Evidently there was no room for prevarication in this matter. With the propaganda that was being carried on day in and day out in the columns of the *People's War* it did not require much candour to make



this admission. Mr. Desai further says: "It does appear that the views and attitude of the Communist Party after the 9th August have been to carry on propaganda contrary to the views and policy of the Congress." A copy of Shri Bhulabhai's note was sent to Mr. Joshi. Mr. Joshi, while complaining that Shri Bhulabhai's decision was *ex parte*, did not seriously contest his findings. In fact in most other matters Shri Bhulabhai had virtually exonerated the Communists. His conclusion that the Communist Party had been carrying on propaganda contrary to the views and policy of the Congress ever since 9th August 1942, is of considerable significance. At a time when the country was passing through a reign of terror and the Congress was involved in a life and death struggle, no organisation allied with the Congress could, without committing a serious outrage to the ordinary tenets of discipline, indulge in such hostile activities.

Although we have had to consider largely the past, we might add that even in the present, the policy of the Communist Party of India, as represented by the writings in the *People's War*, is very far removed from and often opposed to the Congress policy.

We are, therefore, of opinion that there is ample evidence on the record before us to establish a strong *prima facie* case against the members of the Communist Party in the Congress and they should be asked to justify their position and policy and to show cause why action should not be taken against them. We have not dealt with individuals in this report but we can only ask individuals to show cause. We suggest that such Communists as are members of the A.I.C.C. should be asked to do so, as presumably they have a leading position in their party. If any other important member of their party desires to put forward his explanation or justification, he should be allowed an opportunity to do so. We understand that it is the desire of the President, as well as the Working Committee, that full opportunities for explanation and justification be afforded to Communist members of the Congress. We entirely concur in this opinion. As a matter of fact, as we have mentioned above, there has already been a great deal of inquiry and explanation, and, at the instance of Shri P.C. Joshi, Secretary of the Communist Party of India, Shri Bhulabhai Desai has given his opinion.

In the event of the explanations given not being satisfactory, the question will arise as to what further steps should be taken. This is premature at this stage. But we should like to make it clear that the issue before us at present, is not to shut the door of the Congress completely to the Communists but to consider how far it is desirable to allow persons who are opposed to the basic Congress policies to be elected or



to remain on Congress executive bodies which are charged with carrying out those policies.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Vallabhbhai Patel  
Govind Ballabh Pant

## 7. Communists being Treated Leniently<sup>1</sup>

The cause of communism and the name of Russia have suffered most in the hands of the Communist Party of India.

When the World War started, the Congress agreed to join hands with the anti-fascist forces, provided freedom for the country was assured. This demand was not a bargain because, as the situation stood then, neither the Congress nor its leaders could have organised the national forces against fascism without the assurance of national independence. The Communist Party was the one party that tried to do what the Congress could not do, namely, organise the national forces without the assurance of independence, and it failed.

I am not against communism or Russia. I have myself popularised socialist and communist views in the past. But the role of the Communist Party of India has made nationalist India its opponent. Opposition to the Indian Communists is not merely political. The whole nation is angry with them.

When lakhs of Indians staked everything for the country's cause, the Communists were in the opposite camp. This cannot be forgotten. The common man associates the Communist Party with Russia and communism. But the policy and deeds of the Communist Party of India have prejudiced the people both against Russia and communism. We do not want to spoil our relations with Russia, as we are looking forward to a closer association with it when India becomes free.

From its inception till 1935, the C.P.I. had been doing propaganda against the Congress from underground. In 1936, the party changed its policy to one of united front with the Congress. It worked within the Congress for three years. When the Congress offered individual civil disobedience, the Communists criticised the Congress for not taking a

1. Speech at Beawar, 23 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 27 October 1945.

stronger course of action against the British power. But when Russia joined the war against Germany, the imperialist war became a people's war, and the Congress became an object of attack. The Congress organisation began to be disturbed from within. The Communists defied the Congress policy. But the Congress is even now following the least offensive policy towards the Communists. After receiving the charges, we have asked explanations only from members holding executive posts.

No other political organisation would deal so leniently with its opponents as the Congress. For the Congress national independence is the prime objective while the Communists give greater importance to other issues.

The last three years have been a clear indication as to where a particular person or organisation stands in relation to the struggle for independence. It is no use fighting a battle of words when the issues have been clearly decided in action. The Communist Party is itself responsible for its present position. No one should be misguided by the names of Russia and communism.

## 8. The Betrayal<sup>1</sup>

The question of the betterment of your lot is linked up with the struggle for freedom. The growth of the trade union movement in England shows that the workers there had to undergo several hardships in order to win the right of forming their unions. The one lesson that the growth of trade unionism during the last 100 years revealed to us is that our strength lies in our unity.

I also want you to know that the right to strike is your last and the most potent weapon, but this weapon is not to be dangled always. In order to make effective use of it, strikes should not be resorted to for small causes. They should only be resorted to when all peaceful methods to arrive at a settlement have failed.

I strongly disapprove of the attitude of the mill-owners towards their workers in general and in particular of those who victimised their men for participation in the August movement. I admire the part played by the workers during the 1942 movement.

1. Address to millworkers, Delhi, 2 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 3 November and *The Tribune*, 4 November 1945.



I advise you to join the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh.<sup>2</sup> I compliment Mr. Gulzari Lal Nanda, the moving spirit behind the Sangh, who has built up a strong labour movement in Ahmedabad.

I warn the workers against Communist machinations. I rather think that they will try to engineer strikes in the mills after the formation of Congress ministries in the provinces, in order to regain their lost prestige.

The part played by the Communists in breaking<sup>3</sup> strikes in August 1942 has led me to doubt if the Communist Party of India really wants communism or if the Indian Communists are sincere about communism itself. It seems to me that they are moving into oblivion. When the whole country was in revolt against British imperialism, the Communists cut themselves away from the main current of national life. They were playing with fire by arraying against the voice of the people. It was a dangerous thing for them to call the war a people's war, when the Indian people to a man knew that it was an imperialist war.

I have a lot of sympathy with communism and socialism, although I shall not countenance the slavish imitation of any country. I am positively of the opinion that the Indian Communists have given up all their fundamental principles and do not take into account objective conditions in framing their policies. In raising the slogan of the people's war, they have merely deceived themselves.

There has never been any love lost between Indian Communists and the British Government. As the Communists supported the alien government in August 1942, when the country had risen against it, a temporary alliance has come about between them.

The Communists, therefore, cannot take shelter behind technicalities, when their betrayal is sought to be condemned. I was not altogether without hope, when I was released about three or four months ago, that the Communist Party would retrace the wrong step they had taken and join hands with the forces of progress. They have, however, gone still further in the wrong direction and adopted a wrong policy on the communal question which is fundamentally opposed to the Congress policy. When the Communists have fundamental differences with the Congress, how can we allow them to hold elective offices in the Congress? We have not prohibited their enrolment as primary members of the Congress.

2. The Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh was set up by the labour sub-committee of the Gandhi Seva Sangh in 1937 to organise workers on Gandhian principles.
3. In a resolution dated 23 May 1943, the Communist Party of India called upon the Communists to "take a bold and open stand against strikes as they injure the defence of the country by holding up production."



Is there any organisation in the world that has treated its open rebels like this? I am absolutely convinced that the Indian Communists are doing a positive disservice to the cause of communism and socialism and are bringing a bad name to Russia. A question naturally arises: Are the Indian Communists, Communists at all?

What followed the arrest of the leaders in August 1942 was a spontaneous revolt. Human floods and earthquakes that moved the country in 1942 have proved that all the people in India, from one end to the other, could no longer tolerate British rule. The people demonstrated that they could not be cowed down. We shall not submit to the British either today or tomorrow. What happened in August 1942 is the real index of the people's strength. The Government's version is that 1,500 persons were killed as a result of police and military firings in different parts of the country, but my estimate of the killed is between ten and twenty thousand. I do not complain today why these people were killed or why one lakh of people were sent to jail.

The regular oppression of the people, particularly the realisation of punitive fines amounting to lakhs of rupees from the poor villagers, is a heart-rending story. The police and military excesses had reached the climax. I have toured certain districts which participated in the movement with full strength. I am glad that the people, who were thus oppressed, are able to stand erect today with their heads high although they might have been subdued temporarily. I am proud of the fact that the people of my province put an end to the British rule at some places, although the duration ranged from five to ten days, and the British army was used to reconquer the liberated areas. Our unarmed people are not to be blamed for their inability to stand against modern weapons. They could not fight the British army of reconquest with lathis.

We have plunged into the elections with the determination to fight with all our strength. I, or Mr. Asaf Ali, who is our candidate from Delhi, do not want to beg for votes. Mr. Asaf Ali stands for certain principles. If you feel you must support these principles, you should vote for him. I predict that in most of the provinces, if not in all, the Congress will come to power.

The rank and file in the Congress can bring pressure on the leaders to implement the slogan of Quit India. They will not be satisfied with forming ministries in the provinces. In a few months they will have to capture power at the Centre also.

There is no party or group in the country that has not supported the demand for the release of the I.N.A. men. Even the personnel of the

British Indian army have asked for withdrawal of the cases against them.<sup>4</sup> Yet the Government has flouted this unanimous demand of the people and it is holding the trial of the I.N.A. officers. The Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council are supporting the British Government's policy, despite the unanimous voice in the country on this question.

The Indian Civil Service is the most inefficient service in the world. Their glorification has been carried on to an absurd length. Their only qualification is their ability to put down the people by brute force. They are all good policemen. There are, of course, good individuals among them. I can only make a general indictment, not of every member of the service. They will have to change their outlook, if they want to serve a national government.

Thirty to forty lakhs of people died of starvation in Bengal when a government stated to be responsible was in power. The present Government has ruined the people, by misrule and maladministration. The whole Government, from top to bottom, is corrupt and irresponsible. If there had been such a Government in any other country, it would have been hounded and thrown out in a few hours.

We want a rule of the masses, the panchayat raj, in which all would be treated alike. The people would have enough to eat and clothe themselves. However imperfect might be our own government in the beginning, it would be hundred times better than the administration of any foreign government. The problems of poverty and national planning cannot be tackled unless there is a national government. A country cannot make any progress unless it is free. So it is our foremost duty to work for the independence of the country.

The parts of the country where the British set their foot first are the most impoverished. I make it clear that we are not fighting merely for replacing British officers by Indian officers, but we want to change the whole system of the government. The mere changing of hands at a mill does not change the process of grinding.

I also want to drive home the fact that we shall not let one religious group dominate the other. Every group will have perfect freedom to develop its life in accordance with its particular religion and culture. We might make mistakes, but the very conception of freedom presupposes the possibility of mistakes.

4. The Royal Indian Air Force stationed in Calcutta opposed the court-martial of the I.N.A. officers. During the I.N.A. trials it sent its subscription to the I.N.A. defence fund raised by the Bengal Provincial Congress with the words: "for the defence of the brave and patriotic sons of India."



I am for nationalisation of not only heavy industries but also of the land. However, there should be independence before we can have state-owned industries. Under the present government we cannot think of nationalisation of industries, for it will strengthen the foreign domination.

I am overwhelmed with grief over the death of Shrimati Satyavati.<sup>5</sup> She was a fearless worker and one of the bravest servants of the country. I recall how when I saw her in the T.B. Hospital a few days before her death I found her reduced to a skeleton. I give my whole-hearted support to a proposal to raise a memorial to commemorate the memory of Shrimati Satyavati. This memorial, in my opinion, should take the form of a welfare project for women workers and kisans. I support the appeal for a fund of one lakh of rupees for this purpose.

5. (1907-1945); Congress Socialist leader of Delhi; had been jailed 11 times during the freedom struggle. Arrested in 1942, she was released in 1945 on medical grounds but prohibited from entering Delhi. She defied the order and was arrested. She was released only when her health further deteriorated. From prison she went to hospital where she died. When Jawaharlal called on her during her last days she was reported to have said: "My only wish is for India's freedom."

## 9. To Gerald Peel<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
December 3, 1945

Dear Mr. Peel,<sup>2</sup>

I have your letter<sup>3</sup> of November 8th. I am desperately busy but I want to send you at least a brief reply.

It is difficult for me to discuss briefly the big issues that you have mentioned. You know I have been very friendly to communism and to the Communists in India and elsewhere. I feel that the Communist Party of India has taken a wrong step and in justifying it they have been led to further wrong-doing. I had hoped that with the end of the War they would come nearer to the National Congress but, as it happens, they

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. A leader of the Australian Communist Party. He had met Jawaharlal in 1936 during the Faizpur Congress session.
3. In which he was concerned at Jawaharlal "having serious differences with the Indian Communists."



Party in India, and the Congress rank and file are powerfully influenced by it. We do not propose to allow ourselves to be guided by this sentiment in considering any action which might have to be taken.

The Congress has in the past kept its membership open to all individuals, classes, and religious and political groups in India, provided only that the objective of Indian independence was accepted, as well as the method of peaceful and legitimate action. Within that broad framework various ideologies have found their place even when they were not wholly in line with the governing ideology of the Congress. Even foreigners who accepted the objective and methods of the Congress could join it. Thus the Congress has been more of a movement than a narrow political party. It has, however, functioned as a party also, especially in the legislatures. Being an organisation which has indulged in militant action from time to time on an extensive scale, it has inevitably tended to function as a strictly disciplined organisation, even though it consisted of people with differing views on many political and economic matters. These two somewhat differing approaches — as a broad movement and as a disciplined party — have usually been reconciled by allowing full freedom of expression of views and opinions and at the same time insisting on uniformity in action, especially when that action meant a conflict with the British Government in India. In practice this meant freedom in discussing the policy to be laid down, and when that policy had been determined, to adhere to it as closely as possible, and certainly not to oppose it in any way. Without that strictness of uniformity in the field of action, the Congress would have faded away as a militant organisation and become an ineffective motley crowd pulling in different directions and wholly incapable of acting. Thus while different groups continued in the Congress, if any member of the Congress clearly acted against Congress policy, disciplinary action could be, and sometimes actually was, taken against him. This applied particularly to such Congressmen as were members of executive bodies within the organisation. It was manifestly absurd for a person to be a member of an executive committee when he or she did not accept the policy which that committee was supposed to further, or even opposed it.

Owing to the conflicts that have arisen between the viewpoints and policies of the Congress and various communal organisations in India, it was laid down in the Congress constitution some years ago that "no person who is a member of a communal organisation, the object or programme of which involves political activities which are, in the opinion of the Working Committee, anti-national and in conflict with those of the Congress, shall be eligible for election to any office or membership

of any elective Congress committee". Even in this case, it should be noted, members of communal organisations were not barred from joining the Congress as ordinary primary members; they were prevented from seeking office or membership of any executive.

The Communist Party in India came into existence in a very small way early in the twenties. It was for long an illegal organisation. A few of its members joined the Congress but the general attitude and policy of the party were to criticise, ridicule and condemn the Congress policy. The Congress, which had spread to the masses of the people and especially among the peasantry, and was in fact carrying on mass struggles on an unprecedented scale, was characterised as a bourgeois reactionary body trying to prevent mass urges from following their natural courses. In particular the Congress leadership was blamed for coming in the way of the masses. Official Congress policy was often held up to ridicule. In spite of this no action was ever taken against the Communists in India by the Congress, partly because they were so few in number and in influence that they did not count at all, and partly because they belonged to an illegal organisation which was being harassed and suppressed by the governmental authorities. The sympathy of Congressmen always went to all who suffered from Government's repressive policy. In 1929, when the Meerut trial took place, and many prominent Communists were involved in it, leading Congressmen helped in the defence.

Even in the early thirties the general attitude of the Communist Party of India towards the Congress did not change and was one of strong criticism and ridicule. In 1935-36, however, there was a change in the wider policies of the Communist parties all over the world and attempts were made in various countries to form 'Joint Fronts' and 'Popular Fronts'. It took some time for the Communist Party of India to be affected by this, and, indeed, it was resisted for a while, as it directly opposed the policy they had so far been pursuing. However, in 1936, the Communists in India became more friendly to the Congress, exhorted the people to join it, and tried to enter its local executives. From then onwards till the middle of 1939, that is for a little over three years, there was often much friction between the Communists and other elements in the Congress, but on the whole they functioned together and no major crisis arose. It should be noted that even this friction was in regard to internal and domestic policies in India, and seldom had anything to do with communism as such or with reactions to events in the Soviet Union. In the Congress there was a considerable body of opinion which was favourably inclined towards many of the aspects of



communism and socialism, as there were also many who did not approve of the philosophy underlying communism. In particular, the stress by Communists on violent methods was in conflict with the Congress policy of peaceful action. But in practice this did not usually lead to conflict in action, except occasionally in local areas. Usually this resulted in long and sometimes heated argument in A.I.C.C. meetings. A few Communists, not exceeding 2 or 3 per cent of the total membership of A.I.C.C., were elected to that body chiefly because of the system of voting by means of proportional representation (single transferable vote) which enabled small minority groups to be represented.

It should also be noted that within the Congress ranks there was widespread admiration for many of the achievements of the Soviet Union, though some of the policies pursued there were not uniformly admired.

This was the background when the war broke out early in September 1939. The Congress policy before and after this turning-point in world history is wellknown. It was defined at some length in a statement<sup>2</sup> issued by the Working Committee on September 14, 1939, and subsequently this led to the resignation of the Congress Governments in the provinces. The Communist Party of India, characterising the war as an imperialist war, bitterly attacked the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi for not launching a mass struggle immediately after the war began for the emancipation of India. The following extracts from *A Review on Gandhism* published by G. Adhikari<sup>3</sup> at the time of the Ramgarh Congress in March 1940, may be read with interest in the connection:

1. Once Gandhism held the fate of British rule in its hand.... Today it pursues the logic of "unconditional cooperation" with the same Government and that at a time when an unjust, imperialist and predatory war is raging in the world. Gandhism has entered into its decadent phase. At the most critical time of our national history it is acting as a fetter on the national struggle.
2. Immediately on the outbreak of the present war Gandhiji declared that his sympathies were with England and France. He responded to the call of the Viceroy and interviewed him. To the angry demonstrators and correspondents, who resented his action, he replied: "I have come to the conclusion that it is Hitler who is
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 122-138.
3. (b. 1898); active member of the Communist Party of India; convicted in Meerut conspiracy case; arrested in 1934 for political activities; remained underground, 1939-42; editor for some time of *People's War* and later *People's Age*; member of the Central Committee of the C.P.I. for many years after 1948.

responsible for the war. If Hitler thought his claim to Danzig and the Corridor was just he should have submitted it to an impartial tribunal. Britain is fighting a just war. A satyagrahi must support a just cause even when it is espoused by an enemy." This is how nonviolence is invoked in support of an imperialist war. Gandhiji would not bargain with imperialism at this critical hour. He would not use England's difficulty to win India's freedom.... The popular feeling of 1939 on the other hand was violently against his stand and demanded the immediate resumption of the national struggle for freedom.

3. The results of the strategy of stalemate which has been adopted during the last six months are clear enough. Firstly, it will mean that the revolutionary vanguard is decimated in isolation through imperialist repression. Secondly, demoralisation would spread among the centre elements in the Congress and bring them to accept the position that no struggle is possible, Gandhiji's line is the best.... Shorn of its moral embellishment it is the line of the cowardly and compromising bourgeoisie.... Gandhism still retains its leadership in the national movement. It is seeking to use its position to overtake and imprison the rapidly growing forces of revolution, to isolate and eliminate them. It is paving the way for the most ignoble compromise and defeat at a time when all the factors are favourable for decisive victory over imperialism.

In the summer of 1940, the collapse of France and the *blitzkrieg* over England (*sic*) produced powerful reactions in India, and it was not considered desirable to start then the civil disobedience movement which had been envisaged in the Ramgarh Congress Resolution. In the autumn, however, the situation in the West was more stable, while in India conditions were rapidly deteriorating. In October 1940, the Congress initiated the individual satyagraha movement, controlled and conditioned by Gandhiji. Referring to this, the *Communist* of November 1940 wrote as follows:

"Human wit could not have drawn up any better rules for sabotaging all struggle and for dashing the national movement to pieces.... Every Congressman must be made to realise that this satyagraha can only lead to our prostration before the enemy.... That we have a national leadership that can offer such a plan is the supreme tragedy of the situation."

Again the *Communist* of February 1941 wrote:

"The national movement under bourgeois leadership has entered into a blind alley. They feared the masses and trusted imperial-



ism... They put their class above the nation.... They hand over the national organisers to imperialism for safe custody. They dissolve the Congress organisation lest the people might use it as the instrument of a mass struggle."

And in March 1941, the *Communist* wrote:

"The struggle is a jolly merry-go-round. Shut up you irrelevant scoffer! It is a nation's solemn.... nonviolent.... suicide. In the phase of its decay Gandhism can only pursue an anti-struggle and compromising policy.... The future under Gandhism is to lose all that the Congress has built up so far."

When in the summer of 1941 Nazi Germany attacked Russia there was widespread sympathy and anxiety for the Soviet Union all over India. The Communist Party of India naturally felt this all the more keenly but, in view of their past policy, it was not easy for them suddenly to change their whole attitude to the war. It took them many months to do so, but when the change came, it was a complete swing-over to the other extreme. The slogan of the "Imperialist War" gave place to one of the "People's War" and cooperation with Britain was urged. This was directly opposed to the Congress policy then and later and friction resulted from it. Soon after the Cripps negotiations the old ban on the Communist Party of India was removed by the Government and the Communist Party became a legal organisation in India. As such it carried on intensive propaganda for its new point of view, which brought it into direct conflict with Congress activities and propaganda. The Communist Party of India started a weekly, the *People's War*, to carry on this propaganda aggressively. Individual Communists who were members of Congress executives were thus placed in a very invidious position, and as they adhered to the Communist line, complaints against them began to mount up. There were some actual conflicts in public meetings, in Andhra especially, where it was alleged that Communists used violence. In some provinces, as in the U.P., disciplinary action was taken locally against Congress members of executives who were adopting the Communist line. All this was in June and July 1942, prior to August. Thus the position had already become difficult before the August Resolution was passed, and it was becoming increasingly clear that no person could or should be simultaneously a member of two executives with differing and hostile policies. In view of the vastness of the Congress organisation and the relative smallness of the Communist Party of India the problem was not, in a sense, of great importance, but it created a great deal of bitterness.

The resolution of the A.I.C.C., passed on August 8, 1942, was followed

by the arrest of a large number of Congressmen and other events which are well-known. Owing to governmental repression, spontaneous upheavals took place all over the country, hartals, strikes etc. and there was also a good deal of violence in some places. While it was clear that no movement had been officially started by the A.I.C.C. or Gandhiji, it was equally clear that this mass upheaval of unprecedented proportion was the direct consequence of the chain of events that preceded it. Undoubtedly it was a direct manifestation of the people's will, which the Congress had claimed to represent.

In this vast conflict between the forces of Indian nationalism and British imperialism, when people were being shot down by the thousand, and many of the horrors of war were being perpetrated on unarmed people in the towns and countryside alike, the Communist Party of India appeared to be lined up with the British Government in India. It is true that they mildly criticised British policy occasionally and asked for the release of the leaders, but they also condemned as traitors many Congressmen and Congress groups and carried on a virulent campaign against the people's movement. Whether the Communist Party's policy was right or wrong it is not for us to consider here. But there can be no doubt whatever that it was opposed to Congress policy and to that policy which had arisen spontaneously as a result of the people's movement. The two could not possibly be reconciled then or now. The *People's War*, in its various editions in different languages, carried out ceaseless propaganda against this people's movement in which nearly all Congressmen were involved in some form or other.

The *People's War* dated August 23, 1942, had the following:

"The call upon workers to go on political strike is not to exert pressure upon the British Government but to disrupt the country's advance and starve the workers for nothing. Continued production is a vital war necessity whatever the Government might be".

Again in the same issue we find the following:

"We Communists know that to keep production going is the workers' contribution to national defence and to keep transport running is to help to hit the fascist. We realise more seriously than others that there is no short cut to Indian freedom except the unity of our nation which will bring us national government; and not satyagraha nor sabotage, which can only destroy our national defence and open the gates to fascist invaders."

The following extract from Joshi's letter is significant:

"We gave up our strike policy because we consider it anti-national in the conditions of today, aiding the Jap aggressors on the one hand



and intensifying the economic crisis for our own people on the other. That we successfully prevented the Indian working class from resorting to strike even in a period of their worsening material condition is the measure not only of our influence over it but its capacity to understand national interests as its own." Further: "If you enquire into the *bona fides* of the persons who have written to you, you will find that they are those who organised or supported the post-9th August sabotage campaign or have been intensely prejudiced against us by these people. They are bitter against us because we oppose sabotage and exposed them not only in words but in practice."

The first meeting of the Communist Party was held in September 1942. Joshi and Adhikari wrote in the report submitted by them to their party that there were two groups in the Congress Working Committee:

"One, the anti-fascist group of Pandit Jawaharlal, Azad etc., and other, the group of Gandhiji, Patel, Rajendra Prasad and others, who wanted to bring British imperialism on its knees by creating a stand-still in centres of war production and in all means of communications. This group dominated in the Working Committee and so the cutting of wires and removal of rails etc., that took place in the disturbances were according to the ideals contemplated by Gandhiji's group."

Thus the responsibility for the August disturbances was placed by the Communists on the Congress Working Committee directly and positively in September 1942, long before the publication of Tottenham's pamphlet on the subject.

The following extracts are taken from the resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India passed at the same meeting:

"The path along which the present national upsurge is directed is one of national suicide, not of national salvation and freedom. It destroys the nation's indispensable defences, inevitably leading to conditions of civil commotion and disorder, anarchy, and even loot and arson. It makes the national movement the prey of bureaucratic provocation in the name of struggle. Finally, it creates a mass basis for fifth column activity in the name of patriotism. . . . It is leading the nation to a state of moral and political disruption and paralysis which, far from helping the people to get their freedom, can only clear the path of the invader. Such is the disastrous culmination of policies of not relying upon the strength of the people, that is, on national unity, and leaving the initiative in the hands of the imperialist bureaucracy."

Still more emphatic is the following:

"The central tasks to which the party must address itself today are threefold.... (b) carry on persistent political explanations among workers, kisans, student militants and Congressmen, how the present struggle leads to destruction and anarchy and is suicide."

Again:

"Our first and foremost task must be to re-establish firmly the leadership of the unions and the party in the industrial centres and stamp out the efforts of provocateurs and of misguided patriots to drag the working class into the suicidal campaign of sabotage and anarchy. Among the kisans we must conduct a sharp political campaign against these saboteurs and promoters of anarchy.

Among the students you must carry on a political explanatory campaign. We must explain to them that to pursue the policy of permanent strikes, to go in for destruction and anarchy is not to play their part in the freedom movement."

That the party faithfully carried out these decisions is borne out by a circular of the Government of India issued just a year later on 20 September 1943, from which the following extracts are given:

1. The party has as a whole exercised a restraining effect on students and its influence over the student community, though not great has, such as it is, been used in the direction of preventing student strikes and disorderly demonstrations.
2. Such influence as the party has with labour appears generally to have been exercised in the direction of opposing or minimising the effect of strikes.
3. In the party congress held in Bombay from 23 May to 1 June, 1943, there was an attack on the negative policy of the Congress and the resolution openly identified for the first time the Congress Socialist Party and Forward Bloc with the fifth column agents who are accused of taking advantage of the Congress resolution of August 1942, to lead the country to the brink of disaster.
4. Not only are the Communists almost the only party, which fought for victory.... they alone, however hesitantly, have criticised the Congress defeatism from a political point of view as opposed, for instance, to the fundamentally communal criticisms of Congress policy by the Muslim League etc., and have openly attacked as traitors the off-shoots of the Congress, the Forward Bloc and the Congress Socialist Party.

There are numerous reports from Congress committees alleging that the Communists had consistently condemned the August Resolution of the



Congress and Congressmen as responsible for all the disturbances which followed the August Resolution. They had similarly thrown their full weight on the side of the Government advocating unconditional support of the war effort and dissuading all classes whether peasants, workers or students from countenancing anything that might hinder the war effort or actually embarrass the administration. There are also many reports, made apparently after local investigation, showing that the Communists had been violently abusing and vilifying prominent Congressmen, and sometimes cooperating with the police in their activities against some Congressmen in the post-August 9th period. Numerous cases of rowdiness and hooliganism on the part of Communists in connection with meetings organised by or under the auspices of local Congress committees, especially in Andhra, are also mentioned in detail. Some of these cases are still the subject of inquiry and trial in some of the Madras courts. On the other hand, there are charges made by Communists against Congressmen. We have not gone into these charges and counter-charges. It would be difficult to arrive at exact and definite findings without elaborate inquiries, and, in any event, even if some local charge was proved, it will not follow that this was the result of the official policy of the Communist Party of India. There can, however, be no doubt that the Communists in the Congress, as well as those outside it, have ceaselessly opposed both in letter and spirit the Congress policy from early in 1942 onwards and especially since the Resolution of August 8, 1942.

There has been a prolonged correspondence between Gandhiji and Shri P.C. Joshi in regard to the activities of the Communists in the Congress and this has been recently published. At the suggestion of Mr. Joshi, the matter was referred to Shri Bhulabhai Desai for opinion: "You place your whole anti-communist file", wrote Joshi, "before any patriot of eminence who inspires mutual trust, for example, Mrs. Naidu, Rajaji or Bhulabhai. These are your old colleagues and known to us not to be prejudiced against us. Let me have a copy of the file and let them ask me for explanations on any point. I am sure after reading their report you will consign the anti-communist file to the flames." Mr. Desai tendered his opinion on the 20th of August last. In the course of his written opinion Mr. Desai states that "it is candidly admitted by Mr. Joshi that they regarded the European war which has just now ended as the People's War for the reasons he had given." Evidently there was no room for prevarication in this matter. With the propaganda that was being carried on day in and day out in the columns of the *People's War* it did not require much candour to make

this admission. Mr. Desai further says: "It does appear that the views and attitude of the Communist Party after the 9th August have been to carry on propaganda contrary to the views and policy of the Congress.' A copy of Shri Bhulabhai's note was sent to Mr. Joshi. Mr. Joshi, while complaining that Shri Bhulabhai's decision was *ex parte*, did not seriously contest his findings. In fact in most other matters Shri Bhulabhai had virtually exonerated the Communists. His conclusion that the Communist Party had been carrying on propaganda contrary to the views and policy of the Congress ever since 9th August 1942, is of considerable significance. At a time when the country was passing through a reign of terror and the Congress was involved in a life and death struggle, no organisation allied with the Congress could, without committing a serious outrage to the ordinary tenets of discipline, indulge in such hostile activities.

Although we have had to consider largely the past, we might add that even in the present, the policy of the Communist Party of India, as represented by the writings in the *People's War*, is very far removed from and often opposed to the Congress policy.

We are, therefore, of opinion that there is ample evidence on the record before us to establish a strong *prima facie* case against the members of the Communist Party in the Congress and they should be asked to justify their position and policy and to show cause why action should not be taken against them. We have not dealt with individuals in this report but we can only ask individuals to show cause. We suggest that such Communists as are members of the A.I.C.C. should be asked to do so, as presumably they have a leading position in their party. If any other important member of their party desires to put forward his explanation or justification, he should be allowed an opportunity to do so. We understand that it is the desire of the President, as well as the Working Committee, that full opportunities for explanation and justification be afforded to Communist members of the Congress. We entirely concur in this opinion. As a matter of fact, as we have mentioned above, there has already been a great deal of inquiry and explanation, and, at the instance of Shri P.C. Joshi, Secretary of the Communist Party of India, Shri Bhulabhai Desai has given his opinion.

In the event of the explanations given not being satisfactory, the question will arise as to what further steps should be taken. This is premature at this stage. But we should like to make it clear that the issue before us at present, is not to shut the door of the Congress completely to the Communists but to consider how far it is desirable to allow persons who are opposed to the basic Congress policies to be elected or



to remain on Congress executive bodies which are charged with carrying out those policies.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Vallabhbhai Patel  
Govind Ballabh Pant

## 7. Communists being Treated Leniently<sup>1</sup>

The cause of communism and the name of Russia have suffered most in the hands of the Communist Party of India.

When the World War started, the Congress agreed to join hands with the anti-fascist forces, provided freedom for the country was assured. This demand was not a bargain because, as the situation stood then, neither the Congress nor its leaders could have organised the national forces against fascism without the assurance of national independence. The Communist Party was the one party that tried to do what the Congress could not do, namely, organise the national forces without the assurance of independence, and it failed.

I am not against communism or Russia. I have myself popularised socialist and communist views in the past. But the role of the Communist Party of India has made nationalist India its opponent. Opposition to the Indian Communists is not merely political. The whole nation is angry with them.

When lakhs of Indians staked everything for the country's cause, the Communists were in the opposite camp. This cannot be forgotten. The common man associates the Communist Party with Russia and communism. But the policy and deeds of the Communist Party of India have prejudiced the people both against Russia and communism. We do not want to spoil our relations with Russia, as we are looking forward to a closer association with it when India becomes free.

From its inception till 1935, the C.P.I. had been doing propaganda against the Congress from underground. In 1936, the party changed its policy to one of united front with the Congress. It worked within the Congress for three years. When the Congress offered individual civil disobedience, the Communists criticised the Congress for not taking a

1. Speech at Beawar, 23 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 27 October 1945.

stronger course of action against the British power. But when Russia joined the war against Germany, the imperialist war became a people's war, and the Congress became an object of attack. The Congress organisation began to be disturbed from within. The Communists defied the Congress policy. But the Congress is even now following the least offensive policy towards the Communists. After receiving the charges, we have asked explanations only from members holding executive posts.

No other political organisation would deal so leniently with its opponents as the Congress. For the Congress national independence is the prime objective while the Communists give greater importance to other issues.

The last three years have been a clear indication as to where a particular person or organisation stands in relation to the struggle for independence. It is no use fighting a battle of words when the issues have been clearly decided in action. The Communist Party is itself responsible for its present position. No one should be misguided by the names of Russia and communism.

## 8. The Betrayal<sup>1</sup>

The question of the betterment of your lot is linked up with the struggle for freedom. The growth of the trade union movement in England shows that the workers there had to undergo several hardships in order to win the right of forming their unions. The one lesson that the growth of trade unionism during the last 100 years revealed to us is that our strength lies in our unity.

I also want you to know that the right to strike is your last and the most potent weapon, but this weapon is not to be dangled always. In order to make effective use of it, strikes should not be resorted to for small causes. They should only be resorted to when all peaceful methods to arrive at a settlement have failed.

I strongly disapprove of the attitude of the mill-owners towards their workers in general and in particular of those who victimised their men for participation in the August movement. I admire the part played by the workers during the 1942 movement.

1. Address to millworkers, Delhi, 2 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 3 November and *The Tribune*, 4 November 1945.



I advise you to join the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh.<sup>2</sup> I compliment Mr. Gulzari Lal Nanda, the moving spirit behind the Sangh, who has built up a strong labour movement in Ahmedabad.

I warn the workers against Communist machinations. I rather think that they will try to engineer strikes in the mills after the formation of Congress ministries in the provinces, in order to regain their lost prestige.

The part played by the Communists in breaking<sup>3</sup> strikes in August 1942 has led me to doubt if the Communist Party of India really wants communism or if the Indian Communists are sincere about communism itself. It seems to me that they are moving into oblivion. When the whole country was in revolt against British imperialism, the Communists cut themselves away from the main current of national life. They were playing with fire by arraying against the voice of the people. It was a dangerous thing for them to call the war a people's war, when the Indian people to a man knew that it was an imperialist war.

I have a lot of sympathy with communism and socialism, although I shall not countenance the slavish imitation of any country. I am positively of the opinion that the Indian Communists have given up all their fundamental principles and do not take into account objective conditions in framing their policies. In raising the slogan of the people's war, they have merely deceived themselves.

There has never been any love lost between Indian Communists and the British Government. As the Communists supported the alien government in August 1942, when the country had risen against it, a temporary alliance has come about between them.

The Communists, therefore, cannot take shelter behind technicalities, when their betrayal is sought to be condemned. I was not altogether without hope, when I was released about three or four months ago, that the Communist Party would retrace the wrong step they had taken and join hands with the forces of progress. They have, however, gone still further in the wrong direction and adopted a wrong policy on the communal question which is fundamentally opposed to the Congress policy. When the Communists have fundamental differences with the Congress, how can we allow them to hold elective offices in the Congress? We have not prohibited their enrolment as primary members of the Congress.

2. The Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh was set up by the labour sub-committee of the Gandhi Seva Sangh in 1937 to organise workers on Gandhian principles.
3. In a resolution dated 23 May 1943, the Communist Party of India called upon the Communists to "take a bold and open stand against strikes as they injure the defence of the country by holding up production."

Is there any organisation in the world that has treated its open rebels like this? I am absolutely convinced that the Indian Communists are doing a positive disservice to the cause of communism and socialism and are bringing a bad name to Russia. A question naturally arises: Are the Indian Communists, Communists at all?

What followed the arrest of the leaders in August 1942 was a spontaneous revolt. Human floods and earthquakes that moved the country in 1942 have proved that all the people in India, from one end to the other, could no longer tolerate British rule. The people demonstrated that they could not be cowed down. We shall not submit to the British either today or tomorrow. What happened in August 1942 is the real index of the people's strength. The Government's version is that 1,500 persons were killed as a result of police and military firings in different parts of the country, but my estimate of the killed is between ten and twenty thousand. I do not complain today why these people were killed or why one lakh of people were sent to jail.

The regular oppression of the people, particularly the realisation of punitive fines amounting to lakhs of rupees from the poor villagers, is a heart-rending story. The police and military excesses had reached the climax. I have toured certain districts which participated in the movement with full strength. I am glad that the people, who were thus oppressed, are able to stand erect today with their heads high although they might have been subdued temporarily. I am proud of the fact that the people of my province put an end to the British rule at some places, although the duration ranged from five to ten days, and the British army was used to reconquer the liberated areas. Our unarmed people are not to be blamed for their inability to stand against modern weapons. They could not fight the British army of reconquest with lathis.

We have plunged into the elections with the determination to fight with all our strength. I, or Mr. Asaf Ali, who is our candidate from Delhi, do not want to beg for votes. Mr. Asaf Ali stands for certain principles. If you feel you must support these principles, you should vote for him. I predict that in most of the provinces, if not in all, the Congress will come to power.

The rank and file in the Congress can bring pressure on the leaders to implement the slogan of Quit India. They will not be satisfied with forming ministries in the provinces. In a few months they will have to capture power at the Centre also.

There is no party or group in the country that has not supported the demand for the release of the I.N.A. men. Even the personnel of the



British Indian army have asked for withdrawal of the cases against them.<sup>4</sup> Yet the Government has flouted this unanimous demand of the people and it is holding the trial of the I.N.A. officers. The Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council are supporting the British Government's policy, despite the unanimous voice in the country on this question.

The Indian Civil Service is the most inefficient service in the world. Their glorification has been carried on to an absurd length. Their only qualification is their ability to put down the people by brute force. They are all good policemen. There are, of course, good individuals among them. I can only make a general indictment, not of every member of the service. They will have to change their outlook, if they want to serve a national government.

Thirty to forty lakhs of people died of starvation in Bengal when a government stated to be responsible was in power. The present Government has ruined the people, by misrule and maladministration. The whole Government, from top to bottom, is corrupt and irresponsible. If there had been such a Government in any other country, it would have been hounded and thrown out in a few hours.

We want a rule of the masses, the panchayat raj, in which all would be treated alike. The people would have enough to eat and clothe themselves. However imperfect might be our own government in the beginning, it would be hundred times better than the administration of any foreign government. The problems of poverty and national planning cannot be tackled unless there is a national government. A country cannot make any progress unless it is free. So it is our foremost duty to work for the independence of the country.

The parts of the country where the British set their foot first are the most impoverished. I make it clear that we are not fighting merely for replacing British officers by Indian officers, but we want to change the whole system of the government. The mere changing of hands at a mill does not change the process of grinding.

I also want to drive home the fact that we shall not let one religious group dominate the other. Every group will have perfect freedom to develop its life in accordance with its particular religion and culture. We might make mistakes, but the very conception of freedom presupposes the possibility of mistakes.

4. The Royal Indian Air Force stationed in Calcutta opposed the court-martial of the I.N.A. officers. During the I.N.A. trials it sent its subscription to the I.N.A. defence fund raised by the Bengal Provincial Congress with the words: "for the defence of the brave and patriotic sons of India."

I am for nationalisation of not only heavy industries but also of the land. However, there should be independence before we can have state-owned industries. Under the present government we cannot think of nationalisation of industries, for it will strengthen the foreign domination.

I am overwhelmed with grief over the death of Shrimati Satyavati.<sup>5</sup> She was a fearless worker and one of the bravest servants of the country. I recall how when I saw her in the T.B. Hospital a few days before her death I found her reduced to a skeleton. I give my whole-hearted support to a proposal to raise a memorial to commemorate the memory of Shrimati Satyavati. This memorial, in my opinion, should take the form of a welfare project for women workers and kisans. I support the appeal for a fund of one lakh of rupees for this purpose.

5. (1907-1945); Congress Socialist leader of Delhi; had been jailed 11 times during the freedom struggle. Arrested in 1942, she was released in 1945 on medical grounds but prohibited from entering Delhi. She defied the order and was arrested. She was released only when her health further deteriorated. From prison she went to hospital where she died. When Jawaharlal called on her during her last days she was reported to have said: "My only wish is for India's freedom."

## 9. To Gerald Peel<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
December 3, 1945

Dear Mr. Peel,<sup>2</sup>

I have your letter<sup>3</sup> of November 8th. I am desperately busy but I want to send you at least a brief reply.

It is difficult for me to discuss briefly the big issues that you have mentioned. You know I have been very friendly to communism and to the Communists in India and elsewhere. I feel that the Communist Party of India has taken a wrong step and in justifying it they have been led to further wrong-doing. I had hoped that with the end of the War they would come nearer to the National Congress but, as it happens, they

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. A leader of the Australian Communist Party. He had met Jawaharlal in 1936 during the Faizpur Congress session.
3. In which he was concerned at Jawaharlal "having serious differences with the Indian Communists."



are much further away and definitely ranged against it. All agree that there should be some kind of unity between the Hindus, Muslims and others in India. I am convinced, however, that the Communist Party of India has hindered this unity by its complete support of the Muslim League which undoubtedly represents some of the most reactionary tendencies in India.

There is no doubt that the Communist Party of India has isolated itself completely from the main current of national life. For the Communist Party to do so should lead one to seek the cause for it. The Communist Party after all bases its diagnosis of the situation on objective factors; wherein did it go wrong in this evaluation?

You must remember that there has been no question of communism or Russia in this estrangement between the National Congress and the Communist Party. It is purely on domestic political issues. It is surely rather odd to say that on these domestic political issues not only the National Congress but nearly all others are wrong and only the Communist Party is right. My chief regret is that indirectly this attitude of the Communist Party in India has done some harm in India to the cause of communism as well as what the Soviet Union stands for; because the Communist Party is so intimately connected with both these. The Communist Party has fallen into a deep rut of its own making and finds it difficult to get out of it. It may be that I am wrong in some of my judgements. But the fact remains that the Communist Party in India is very unpopular today with large masses of people. That in itself should give them food for thought.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 10. Report on Communist Members' Reply<sup>1</sup>

A large number of complaints against the activities of the Communist Party and its individual members were received by the A.I.C.C. office from subordinate Congress committees and also from some prominent Congressmen. The Working Committee appointed a sub-committee to examine

1. This was given to the Congress Working Committee and printed in the *Congress Bulletin* No. 2, 24 January 1946.

the material and to take such action as might be necessary. We framed certain charges after carefully and dispassionately weighing the evidence.

The charge sheet was delivered to the Communist members of the A.I.C.C. on the 21st of September. They were asked to send their reply in writing within two weeks. They were also told that they could, if they so desired, see the members of the sub-committee and explain their position personally. On their request a copy of the report on which the charges were based was given to them on the 24th of September. A letter dated 28th September was subsequently received from Shri Sardesai<sup>2</sup> on their behalf asking for a week's extension to enable them to prepare a reply. Before the expiry of the period of three weeks, another communication was received from Shri Sardesai stating that it had not been possible for them to prepare the reply within even the extended period. He definitely promised to send the same by the end of October, but again failed to do so. Their reply<sup>3</sup> was despatched from Bombay about a month later on the 27th of November. It is a bulky volume meant primarily for propaganda. Hardly any attempt has been made in it to meet the specific charges nor is there a word of regret in it. The evidence on which the charges are based is not impugned. The authenticity of the document cited in the report is accepted. The signatories have throughout pleaded justification and attacked the fundamental policy of the Congress in unmistakable terms. Their explanation amounts to a tirade against the Congress. Its tone throughout is one of self-righteous arrogance. It leaves no doubt whatsoever about the validity of the charges framed against them. It is clear from their reply that they have been actively opposing and obstructing the policy and the programme of the Congress for a considerable time. They are still acting in a hostile manner so as to undermine and injure the prestige and position of the Congress organisation.

They have altogether forfeited the confidence of the Congress and are unworthy to occupy any responsible or elective place in the Congress. They seem to have already realised their position. Conscious of their guilt, their members have already resigned from all subordinate Congress

2. S.G. Sardesai (b. 1907); leading trade unionist of Bombay; member of the C.P.I. Central Committee for several years; participated in the agitation for the liberation of Goa.
3. A 200-page reply of the Communist members of the A.I.C.C. to charges made against them was delivered at the A.I.C.C. office on 3 December 1945. In this they made counter-charges and justified their line as in complete accord with India's national interests.



committees and also from the primary membership of the Congress. We recommend that Shri S.G. Sardesai, V.G. Bhagat, V.D. Chitale,<sup>4</sup> K.M. Ashraf, S. Sajjad Zaheer, Sohan Singh Josh, Karyanand Sharma,<sup>5</sup> R.D. Bharadwaj should be expelled from the A.I.C.C. and necessary directions should be sent to all provincial Congress committees so that they may take appropriate steps wherever necessary to remove members of the Communist Party from all elective offices.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Vallabhbhai Patel  
Govind Ballabh Pant

Calcutta,  
December 9, 1945.

4. (1906-1961); organised youth leagues and civil liberties unions in the Bombay province, 1928-34; participated in Salt and Forest satyagrahas, 1930-31; took part in the Goa liberation movement.
5. (b. 1900); a militant peasant leader of Bihar; jailed several times during the freedom struggle.

## 11. Violence in Public Activities<sup>1</sup>

I have read a statement in the press given by the President of the Mahila Atmaraksha Samity<sup>2</sup> of Calcutta. In this statement she refers to certain attacks made on some workers of the Samiti by some unknown persons who were wearing Gandhi caps and carrying Congress flags. The reason for their attacks is stated to be a feeling against Communists.

I have no other information about this, but I must say that this intrusion of violent methods in public activities is most painful and deplorable. It is even more objectionable to interfere with women workers in any way. The Samity is a non-party organisation, but even if it was not so, nobody had any business to interfere with its work.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 December 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 30 December 1945.
2. The Mahila Atmaraksha Samity was a non-party organisation of women engaged in social service. On 15 December 1945, the workers of the Samity were alleged to have been assaulted by a group of men claiming to belong to the Congress.

The fact that there is a great deal of resentment in the public against Communist policy and method is no excuse whatever for any person to misbehave in this way. For those who claim to be Congressmen this is totally unbecoming and unworthy of their claim.

Communists or any other group opposed to us in policy or method should be allowed to function peacefully. On no account must any Congressman lower the standard of the Congress by indulging in such activities.

## 12. Attacks on Communists<sup>1</sup>

I have already expressed my strong condemnation of the recent attacks on the Communist headquarters in Bombay and the injuries caused to a number of persons there. I cannot believe that any Congressmen can be responsible for these attacks, but whoever they are, they have done an ill-service to our cause. No cause, least of all the cause we stand for, ultimately prospers by hooliganism. I should like to add that instances have been brought to my notice when hooliganism was indulged in by Communists and their sympathisers. As I have been travelling about a great deal I had not read about them at the time.

In Cawnpore, especially, there have been several attacks on Congress men and interference in Congress meetings by Communists. On one occasion, my colleague, Shri Ganga Sahai Chaubey, a respected Congressman of Cawnpore, was badly injured. This kind of thing, from whatever group it may proceed, is a disgrace to our public life and it is time that it was ended. In particular, all Congressmen must beware of it and must not retaliate in kind even if provoked.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 January 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 30 January 1946.



# ECONOMIC AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS





## 1. Freedom and Equality<sup>1</sup>

The part India will play in the post-war settlement depends on the status of India in international affairs at the time. An independent India or an India on the verge of independence with full control over her foreign and international affairs will obviously play an important part.

Both in South East Asia and Western Asia, India will have an important role by virtue of her size, enormous resources, great potential capacity and strategic position. Her general outlook has been one in favour of independence of the Asian countries both in South East and Western Asia, as well as freedom for all oppressed people anywhere.

Further, India must stand for racial equality and the elimination of the causes that lead to war and conflict. Together with China, India has a long record of non-aggression, and in future both these countries will throw their weight on the side of world peace.

India seeks independence, both political and economic, but she realises fully that there is no such thing as isolated national independence today. In the world of today, nations have to depend on each other in most spheres of activities. Through India's independence is viewed the context of interdependence of nations and the rapid development of international order to ensure this interdependence as well as national freedom.

In the economic sphere, India is to rapidly industrialise, but I hope that this industrialisation will not be based on the exploitation of foreign markets to the detriment of other people. We would neither be exploited ourselves in this way nor exploit others but would rather base our economy and the economy of the world on the mutual good of all people and the raising of standards of living everywhere.

This will mean a great deal of national and world planning. Nevertheless, a great deal of individual initiative will also be left within limits, provided it does not result, in furtherance of equality, in some kind of inequality between nations and groups and individuals. But efforts should be made to minimise them so far as possible and for a balanced structure of society within our country and in the world.

Culturally, international cooperation will eventually tend towards common features being introduced all over the world. But it is desirable for India to develop her culture according to her natural genius. There

1. Interview to All India Radio, Delhi, 9 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 10 July 1945.

must be coordination between this national culture and the inevitable international culture which is a product of modern life.

If the proposed interim Government comes off in the manner we envisage it, it can only be considered as a step towards our object. It can hardly be called a national government in the real sense of the word. At the most it is a door leading to the future national government. If properly constituted, it is to be welcomed as a step enabling India to reach her object of independence and at the same time in furthering the policies I have indicated. To some extent it may be able to do both in the national and international fields.

It is completely a wrong approach to them if the major problems of India must wait solution till the end of the war with Japan. Naturally war absorbs a lot of energy, but war itself requires an approach to those big problems. If these problems are left in a static condition till the end of the war, they will become more difficult to solve.

## 2. Need for Data on the Indian Economy<sup>1</sup>

Ever since we began the work of the Planning Committee we have been hampered by the lack of reliable data and statistics and other material relating to various subjects under consideration. To begin with, much of the required data is not in existence and such as existed is not made available to the public. These difficulties have grown during wartime when, for alleged reasons of security and economy, reports have not been published for a number of years. Even when such reports were published, it had been difficult to obtain copies. The material collected by various panels appointed by the Planning Department of the Government of India is wholly inaccessible.

It is obvious that no effective planning can take place without sufficient data. It is urgently necessary for the Government to publish or release all such reports and statistics as are with them and have not so far been published. Among these are the reports and statistics relating

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 17 September 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 September 1945.



to the trade and industry of the country such as the report of the American Grady Mission which came in 1942.<sup>2</sup> Whatever reasons there might have been for the suppression of this report during wartime, these reasons do not hold good now. The Government should release the report. To suppress reports made by independent experts would only lead to the conclusion that the reports contain matter which is not to the credit of the Government or that they may be recommendations for the industrial development of the country which the Government is anxious to suppress.

In any event this report of the Grady Mission must be published now as well as other reports and material in the possession of the Government. This is not merely necessary for the National Planning Committee, but in order to interest the public in the planning of the various schemes that are being put forward.<sup>3</sup> Only an intelligent public appreciation of these matters can lead to public cooperation.

2. At the invitation of the Viceroy, a U.S. Technical Mission, headed by Dr. Henry F. Grady, visited India and reported in August 1942 on India's war production. It dealt specifically with the expansion and rationalisation of industry, mass production methods, training of skilled labour and utilisation of resources. The report had not been published.
3. In August 1945, the Government of India announced that it would develop the basic industries in India, if private capital was not forthcoming. Some existing basic industries of national importance, such as aircraft, automobiles, tractors, chemicals, iron and steel products might be nationalised. The Government established a Department of Planning and Development.

### 3. National Planning<sup>1</sup>

The Chairman commenced proceedings by welcoming members after a break of five years, and referred to the immense changes that had taken place in the course of the war in this country as well as all over the world. These changes, he remarked, had their inevitable reaction upon the task of the Planning Committee. The moment he was free to attend to the work of the Planning Committee, he had thought fit to

1. Jawaharlal's minutes of the National Planning Committee meeting held at Bombay on 17 September 1945. National Planning Committee Papers, 1945, N.M.M.L.

convene an informal meeting. He had had some discussion on the subject on the 11th September with some members and Chairmen and Secretaries of Sub-Committees, who could be got together at a very short notice. There was a general consensus in favour of resuming the work of the Planning Committee. This informal meeting was called to consider whether the work should be resumed, and if so, the ways and means of most expeditiously dealing with the task of the Committee.

The Chairman invited all present to offer their views on the main question before the meeting.

#### 4. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
October 4, 1945

My dear Bapu,

I have received today, on return from Lucknow, your letter<sup>2</sup> of the 2nd October. I am glad you have written to me fully and I shall try to reply at some length but I hope you will forgive me if there is some delay in this, as I am at present tied up with close-fitting engagements. I am only here now for a day and a half. It is really better to have informal talks but just at present I do not know when to fit this in. I shall try.

Briefly put my view is that the question before us is not one of truth *versus* untruth or nonviolence *versus* violence.<sup>3</sup> One assumes as one must that true cooperation and peaceful methods must be aimed at and a society which encourages these must be our objective. The whole question is how to achieve this society and what its content should be. I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and nonviolence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment. Narrow-minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Following a discussion in September 1945 in the Congress Working Committee on social and economic objectives after independence, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal that there appeared to be a fundamental difference between them and the public should be made aware of it. He was an old man and "I have, therefore, named you as my heir. I must, however, understand my heir and my heir should understand me. Then alone shall I be content."

3. Mahatma Gandhi had said that for him, "without truth and nonviolence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. We can realise truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life."



Then again we have to put down certain objectives like a sufficiency of food, clothing, housing, education, sanitation etc., which should be the minimum requirement for the country and for everyone. It is with these objectives in view that we must find out specifically how to attain them speedily. Again it seems to me inevitable that modern means of transport as well as many other modern developments must continue and be developed. There is no way out of it except to have them. If that is so inevitably a measure of heavy industry exists. How far will that fit in with a purely village society? Personally I hope that heavy or light industries should all be decentralised as far as possible and this is feasible now because of the development of electric power. If two types of economy exist in the country either there should be conflict between the two or one will overwhelm the other.

The question of independence and protection from foreign aggression, both political and economic, has also to be considered in this context. I do not think it is possible for India to be really independent unless she is a technically advanced country. I am not thinking for the moment in terms of just armies but rather of scientific growth. In the present context of the world we cannot even advance culturally without a strong background of scientific research in every department. There is today in the world a tremendous acquisitive tendency both in individuals and groups and nations, which leads to conflicts and wars. Our entire society is based on this more or less. That basis must go and be transformed into one of cooperation, not of isolation which is impossible. If this is admitted and is found feasible then attempts should be made to realise it not in terms of an economy which is cut off from the rest of the world but rather one which cooperates. From the economic or political point of view an isolated India may well be a kind of vacuum which increases the acquisitive tendencies of others and thus creates conflicts.

There is no question of palaces for millions of people.<sup>4</sup> But there seems to be no reasons why millions should not have comfortable up-to-date homes where they can lead a cultured existence. Many of the present overgrown cities have developed evils which are deplorable. Probably we have to discourage this overgrowth and at the same time encourage the village to approximate more to the culture of the town.

4. Mahatma Gandhi had written "...If India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognised that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces."

It is many years ago since I read *Hind Swaraj*<sup>5</sup> and I have only a vague picture in my mind. But even when I read it 20 or more years ago it seemed to me completely unreal. In your writings and speeches since then I have found much that seemed to me an advance on that old position and an appreciation of modern trends. I was therefore surprised when you told us that the old picture still remains intact in your mind.<sup>6</sup> As you know, the Congress has never considered that picture, much less adopted it. You yourself have never asked it to adopt it except for certain relatively minor aspects of it. How far it is desirable for the Congress to consider these fundamental questions, involving varying philosophies of life, it is for you to judge. I would imagine that a body like the Congress should not lose itself in arguments over such matters which can only produce great confusion in people's minds resulting in inability to act in the present. This may also result in creating barriers between the Congress and others in the country. Ultimately of course this and other questions will have to be decided by representatives of free India. I have a feeling that most of these questions are thought of and discussed in terms of long ago, ignoring the vast changes that have taken place all over the world during the last generation or more. It is 38 years since *Hind Swaraj* was written. The world has completely changed since then, possibly in a wrong direction. In any event any consideration of these questions must keep present facts, forces and the human material we have today in view, otherwise it will be divorced from reality. You are right in saying that the world, or a large part of it, appears to be bent on committing suicide.<sup>7</sup> That may be an inevitable development of an evil seed in civilisation that has grown. I think it is so. How to get rid of this evil, and yet how to keep the good in the present as in the past is our problem. Obviously there is good, too, in the present.

These are some random thoughts hurriedly written down and I fear they do injustice to the grave import of the questions raised. You will

5. *Hind Swaraj* was written in 1908 in answer to those Indians who preached violence as a remedy for their country's ills. Mahatma Gandhi sought to save India from 'modern civilization' by calling upon the people to a life of simplicity and renunciation.
6. Mahatma Gandhi had written; "I have said that I still stand by the system of Government envisaged in *Hind Swaraj*. These are not mere words. All the experience gained by me since 1908 when I wrote the booklet has confirmed the truth of my belief."
7. "I must not fear if the world today is going the wrong way and like the proverbial moth burns itself eventually in the flame round which it dances more and more fiercely."



forgive me, I hope, for this jumbled presentation. Later I shall try to write more clearly on the subject.<sup>8</sup>

About the Hindustani Prachar Sabha and about the Kasturba Fund, it is obvious that both of them have my sympathy and I think they are doing good work. But I am not quite sure about the manner of their working and I have a feeling that this is not always to my liking. I really do not know enough about them to be definite. But at present I have developed a distaste for adding to my burden of responsibilities when I feel that I cannot probably undertake them for lack of time. These next few months and more are likely to be fevered ones for me and others. It seems hardly desirable to me, therefore, to join any responsible committee for form's sake only.

About Sarat Bose, I am completely in the dark as to why he should grow so angry with me, unless it is some past grievance about my general attitude in regard to foreign relations. Whether I was right or wrong it does seem to me that Sarat has acted in a childish and an irresponsible manner. You will remember perhaps that Subhas did not favour in the old days the Congress attitude towards Spain, Czechoslovakia, Munich and China. Perhaps this is a reflection of that old divergence of views. I know of nothing else that has happened.

I see that you are going to Bengal early in November. Perhaps I may visit Calcutta for three or four days just then. If so, I hope to meet you.

You may have seen in the papers an invitation of the President of the newly formed Indonesian Republic to me and some others to visit Java. In view of the special circumstances of the case I decided immediately to accept this invitation subject of course to my getting the necessary facilities for going there. It is extremely doubtful if I shall get these facilities, and so probably I shall not go. Java is just two days by air from India, or even one day from Calcutta. The Vice-President of this Indonesian Republic, Mohammad Hatta, is a very old friend of mine. I suppose you know that the Javanese population is almost entirely Muslim.

I hope you are keeping well and have completely recovered from the attack of influenza.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawahar

8. After a further discussion in November 1945, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal that there was not much difference in their outlook, because they were agreed upon the goal of bringing about "man's highest intellectual economic, political and moral development" and "an equal right and opportunity for all"

## 5. The Development of Scientific Research<sup>1</sup>

I am convinced that of all the big problems that face India today nothing is more important than the development of scientific research, both pure and applied, and scientific method. This is indeed the basis and foundation of all other work.

In the world of today, though many pay lip homage to science and use it for purposes both good and evil, there are few who adopt the scientific method in dealing with life's many problems. The extensive use of that method can only come through a properly directed education and a large number of research institutions which deal with pure science as well as the innumerable applications of it.

Probably there are few countries, claiming to be civilised, which are so lacking in the scientific method as well as research as India. We have to fill this lack rapidly and on an extensive scale, and at the same time efficiently. Any research institute which has done pioneering work in this direction is, therefore, deserving of support.

1. Message to the Royal Institute of Science in Bombay on the occasion of its silver jubilee, 21 November 1945. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22 November 1945.

## 6. Arrangements for Transitional Period<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am in favour of the reconstitution of the Central Government for the transitional period, while the permanent constitution was being framed. This should take place only after the results of all the elections, Central and provincial, are announced by the end of the year, as otherwise there would be confusion of issues and no satisfactory reconstitution would be possible.

On the procedure for the reconstitution of the Centre, I am apprehensive that the provincial representatives, if consulted, will only complicate the situation; but I have no objection to the Central legislature

1. On the Viceroy's instructions, B.N. Rau, who was at that time on special duty in the Governor-General's Secretariat, met Jawaharlal on 21 November 1945 to ascertain his views on the constitutional problem. This note on the discussion by Rau was printed in his *India's Constitution in the Making*.



being asked for a panel of names for a final choice by the Governor-General.

The original Cripps' plan of 1942 has visualised a membership for the constituent assembly of 200. I do not consider it adequate. On the other hand, I think that it might with advantage consist of 300 or even 400 members. The actual drafting will be done by a committee appointed by the constitution-making body, which will probably lay down certain general principles, leaving the details to the committee. Having laid down the general principles and appointed the drafting committee, the constitution-making body would disperse for the time being and meet again to discuss the draft after it has been prepared by the committee. I do not think that this would lead to any delay. The disadvantage of a small body would be that the same members must necessarily participate in the discussion of all matters; and if there should be a deadlock, no fresh light would be forthcoming. A large body necessarily means more ideas thrown into the common pool and extreme views are not likely to prevail.

B.N. Rau:<sup>2</sup> Will the binding character of the decisions of the constituent assembly not deter some of the provinces from joining in deliberations? For example, if you tell the Punjab and Sind that by coming into the constitution-making body, they would be bound by its decisions even when they themselves dissent from those decisions, are they not likely to stand out from the very beginning? If, on the other hand, you tell every province that it is free to come in, contribute to the discussion and accept or reject the resulting constitution as it thinks fit, is there not a greater chance of its coming into the constitution-making body and of accepting the constitution framed, either immediately or possibly at a later date? Of course, if this plan is adopted, the decisions of the constitution-making body must not be held to bind even the dissentient units; these must be given a chance of accepting or rejecting the constitution as they think fit. The Congress has accepted the position that no unit can be coerced into a constitution of which it does not itself approve.

J.N.: Yes; I think it would be better to give an option of adherence or accession to every unit, after the deliberations of the constitution-making

2. (1887-1953); member of the Indian Civil Service; judge, Calcutta High Court, 1935; chairman, Hindu Law Committee, 1941; Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, 1945; Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly, 1946-49; India's representative and later leader of India's delegation to the U.N., 1949-52; judge, International Court of Justice at The Hague, 1952-53.

body are over. Undoubtedly, there can be no coercion in the matter. I recognise that the psychological effect of telling a province that even if it comes into the discussions, the door will still be open for it to go out, may be that it will elect to stay in.

Rau: From another point of view also, would it not be unreasonable to ask a province to join the constitution-making body and compel it to accept a constitution which has not yet been framed and is only to be framed by that body? The province may very well say that without knowing what safeguards for minorities the proposed constitution is to contain, it cannot be expected to take a leap in the dark.

J.N.: That is so. At the same time, I cannot help thinking that the question of safeguards has not hitherto been discussed in the context of existing conditions. For example, take the question of recruitment to the services; it is quite possible that under a national government there will be such an expansion of governmental activities in planning, industrial development, etc., that there will be room in the services for everybody with certain minimum qualifications and the question of communal ratios will not arise at all. Everybody capable of making a contribution will have a job. Similarly, in the defence forces our plan may be to have a standing force of small dimensions, but extremely efficient and well-equipped, with a large reserve consisting of all able-bodied citizens, with perhaps compulsory military training for a certain period. On this plan, again, all communal questions would recede into the background. I should also like the new constitution to lay the greatest emphasis on State activities such as planning industrial development, relief of unemployment, nationalisation of key industries, etc., which will cut across communal divisions. Another safeguard that I have in mind would be to give the Upper House of the Central legislature specific functions for the protection of minorities, the Upper House being constituted on a province-basis or otherwise, so as to produce a balance of the various interests concerned.

Rau: Even assuming that some or all of these safeguards are to be put into the constitution, don't you think that a province might very well say: 'Let us see exactly what safeguards go into the constitution before you ask us to accept it'?

J.N.: I agree that it should have the option of accepting or rejecting the constitution after it has been made.

Rau: Should the proceedings of the constituent assembly be public or private? In Canada the Constitutional Convention sits behind closed doors; in Australia, the sittings are public, in South



Africa they meet in secret, following the Canadian rather than the Australian precedent. The results are that the Canadian Convention takes 18 days to arrive at a draft of the constitution and South Africa takes about three months, while Australia takes nearly a year. The great advantage of private sittings is that there will be no playing to the gallery and members can, therefore, without any embarrassment, abandon a position as soon as discussion shows it to be untenable, whereas if the proceedings are public, there are likely to be long speeches, with the press joining in on one side or the other with the result that members will find it difficult to retreat from extreme positions, and agreed solutions will be retarded, if not prevented.

J.N.: Tentatively I favour the proceeding being in secret, at any rate initially.

Rau: What shall be the proportion of representation of the Indian States in the constituent assembly?

J.N.: In the course of my discussions on this subject, the suggestion was made to me that the States' representatives might be on a fifty-fifty basis, that is to say, half the number to be elected by the elected members of the State legislatures and the other half nominated by the Ruler.

Rau: If the Swiss idea of half-cantons was adopted a possible solution for the problem of partition of the country raised by Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League could be formed. Would it be possible to have half-provinces in what is now the Punjab or Bengal, with a certain degree of autonomy in cultural and other matters for each half?

J.N.: I am attracted by the suggestion as it will go a great way towards safeguarding territorial minorities.

## 7. Interview with R. G. Casey<sup>1</sup>

Pandit Nehru came in to see me late this evening, on return from an electioneering tour in Bengal and Assam. He was quieter and less belligerent than when he saw me before with Azad and Patel.

1. Lord Casey's Diary, entry for 21 December 1945. India Office Library and Records, London.

I asked him the straight question — “What is it that you think we should do?” He did not (of course) give any direct answer — but it started him talking about the problem — and he gradually loosened up.

He repeated again what he had said before when we met — that the constituent assembly must have powers to implement its decisions and not merely be an advisory body. I said that I was beginning to wonder what would be achieved by holding a constituent assembly if the Muslim League was not going to play. I said that it was beginning to look to me as if we would have to impose a temporary constitution on India — and let them amend it later to suit themselves. I used the words “a loose federation”, with which he agreed. I said that possibly the present constitution suitably amended and with substantial safeguards for the Muslims might well do. He said that he would be in favour of making it possible for certain areas to contract out of the constitution after, say, 10 years.

However, he kept on reverting to the constituent assembly idea and said that if it could not agree on the terms on which a Muslim majority area could contract out (i.e. the terms of the plebiscite etc.), then the Muslims might have the right to determine this. I said that I thought that we could not avoid the unwelcome responsibility of imposing the terms in this regard.

I said — and he agreed — that I believed that Jinnah would not want the sort of Pakistan that would arise out of a fair plebiscite. The Muslim League did not want a “sylvan retreat”. They would not want only two-thirds of Bengal and a third of Assam. He added that the truncated Punjab that would emerge from a plebiscite would be no good to Jinnah.

He spoke a good deal about the necessity for the constituent assembly to be elected on adult franchise and for the voting to be on a different basis (practically, as he admitted, the Soviet system of each village electing someone to the next higher body — and then these next higher bodies electing people to the next higher — and so on — so as to give the people at least the feeling that they had a real hand in affairs — and not the remote business of a wide range of people directly electing one man).

He also said that they would have to get away from communal constituencies — although he admitted that constituencies should be arranged so that a predominantly Muslim or Hindu area should have a proper opportunity of electing its own people.

I said that such fundamental changes as he envisaged would take a long time — and a tremendous lot of argument. I said I did not believe that the big changes that he envisaged would have any appreciable effect on the final representation — and he rather grudgingly admitted this.



At one stage, he suggested that the whole problem of India should be submitted to international arbitration.

## 8. The Common Man of India<sup>1</sup>

I thank you for your small gift. You cannot take very much credit for your gift as you are only discharging a part of the debt which you owe to the nation. It is, however, no small consolation inasmuch as people do not easily repay their debts.

It is good to hear from you, the residents of India's capital, talk about the common man of India. We have neglected him for a long time. You, who have assembled here, do not represent a true picture of India. The people in Britain are faced with difficult problems. It is becoming increasingly difficult for them to maintain the pre-war standard of living. The reason is that their standard of living is dependent on the economic exploitation of other countries. It is no longer possible to continue such exploitation. I do not wish ill of any country, but I am not prepared to tolerate that India should be exploited by any other country for maintaining the standard of living of its people. The world is passing through a critical period. We in India have to ensure equal opportunities for all and remove the obstacles that prevent our people from going ahead. In doing so, we cannot allow any class or group to thwart the national economy.

A lot of tall talk is going on about economic planning. So far as our country is concerned the most fundamental problem is that of raising the standard of living of the peasantry and on that depends the prosperity and economic wellbeing of our country. The whole economic edifice will topple down if a sense of security is not assured to them. Then there is also the question of industrial progress of the country which raises many important issues. The industrial progress cannot be achieved without an all-round improvement in communication, transport, and public health standards. We have to fill the whole picture and avoid pitfalls. The time when we can think of gradual progress has passed

1. Address to a meeting of merchants in Delhi, 24 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 25 January 1946.

and we have to run fast and even take the risk of falling over. Events will not wait for us.

I think that we are in a revolutionary age. A revolution in my view does not mean anarchy or disorder. We cannot bring about a revolution through terrorism. It is childish to think that any big changes can be brought about by terrorism. The atom bomb has completely revolutionised the whole outlook on life all over the world. The world has now to choose between total destruction or some new method of solving human problems. The atomic energy can be used for good or for evil.

I am confident that India will attain freedom soon. I am all the time visualising a picture of free India and thinking how we will construct it. I think that free India will not be the work of a handful of people, but will be built by the 400 million people of India. Each one of us must play his or her part in building it.



## MISCELLANEOUS





## PERSONAL

1. To Padmaja Naidu<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
June 26, 1945

Bebec dear,

This is the first letter I have written, or rather am writing, since my release from jail at Almora eleven days ago. I have been constantly on the move — Khali, Almora, Ranikhet, Naini Tal, Lucknow — a night in Allahabad and then Bombay. I returned home late last night and have been looking round since then trying to pick up old threads and fit in to the old-new scheme of things. It is surprising how quickly one falls into line and resumes the old routine — not quite of course for something is always lacking or some new addition makes a difference. The environment is much the same — the changes and differences are within. I have not quite got over a feeling of strangeness which is not surprising as I have been back only some hours.

Indu met me here on my arrival from Almora. That was a pleasant surprise for I did not expect her to make the journey from Kashmir so quickly. She went with me to Bombay and we returned together. She is of course eager to be back to her babe in Kashmir. I want to go with her for two weeks if I can manage it. For the moment I am at a loose end not knowing how things will fashion themselves. Perhaps the next three or four days will indicate future possibilities. Betty and children are arriving here tomorrow night.

During all these three years I have had little news of you — just sometimes a line or two in Indu's letters or Nan's. You are keeping well I hope. I had hoped that perhaps I might see you in Bombay but of course you could not come when Papi was so ill.

It is an odd world — it changes and yet it does not change — or rather while it changes and we change, we still imagine it (and ourselves) to be what it was and we were. How difficult it is for us to adjust ourselves to a changing environment. For the moment I am living in the excitement of my coming back and meeting old friends again. When this wears off, I shall have to find my own level — always a difficult process.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

When will I meet you, I wonder! I hope it will be fairly — I have not quite recovered yet my sense of time. Time in prison is very different from normal times.

Love,

Yours,  
Jawahar

## 2. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Running train  
30-6-45

Indu darling,

I was sorry to leave you in bed and my thoughts are with you. Take care of yourself and you will be well in three or four days. Don't be in too much of a hurry to move about. This will only delay recovery.

I hope to go with you to Kashmir but I do not know how things will shape. Anyway I shall join you there. I shall keep you informed of my programme. Perhaps I might have to stay in Simla two weeks. If so you need not wait for me, provided you are well enough to travel. There is also the possibility of your joining me in Simla to recuperate for a few days before you undertake a longer journey.

The last 11 days with you have been lovely though I am afraid I have spent most of my time away from you. I wish I had not to go away so soon. But I hope to be with you soon.

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

## 3. To Krishna Hutheesing<sup>1</sup>

Running train  
30.6.45

Darling Betty,

Harsha and Ajit are delightful children and they are shaping very well indeed. I was happy to see them. And the story you told me about

1. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister* (Faber and Faber, London, 1963).

them is very revealing and creditable. I wish I could have seen more of them. But even this brief glimpse has been heartening.

I suppose I shall see you and Raja in any event — either in Delhi or Simla. I shall keep you informed of developments and my future programme. I fear I shall have to stay there [Simla] for a fortnight.

Love to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,  
Jawahar

#### 4. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
1.7.45

Darling Indu,

Feroze's telegram about you reached me this afternoon. I am glad you are improving but I am afraid your recovery will take a few days. This must put you out but such untoward happenings have to be accepted and put up with. I am anxious that you should not start on a long journey before the doctor agrees to it.

I am afraid I shall have to stay here for a fortnight or so. I see no escape from it. Maulana wanted me to stay with him so here I am. That was as well as Amrit Kaur is almost crowded out of her little house. This house (Armesdell) is government property and used to be occupied by a member of the Viceroy's staff. It is well-appointed and I suppose we are in a sense the Viceroy's guests. Red-liveried *chaprasis* are in evidence, and both the soap and the notepaper are embossed. 'Viceregal Lodge'! I find it quite impossible to use this Viceregal notepaper though I have succumbed to the soap. Rather odd this atmosphere for me. I do not feel too happy about it. The Viceregal chef, or at any rate the person who functions here, is not too good.

Maulana, Pantji and I are here with our respective secretaries, but some other people also feed here. I have a double room with 2 bathrooms and a dressing room. So if you happened to come here for a couple of days, you could be easily accommodated.

The journey from Allahabad to Simla was a sore trial. I had hardly any rest during the day or the night and the vast crowds at some of the

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.



stations exhausted me. My voice is very hoarse. I can't make out why I attract these crowds. Very gratifying no doubt but also very trying and often irritating. Here in Simla I have had to go out to the balcony and verandah frequently to give *darshan*. I doubt if I shall ever be able to go out for a walk because of crowds following, except at dead of night.

Tell Betty that though Simla is overfull and people are complaining of being pushed out of their houses or rooms, still I am assured that something can always be fixed up for her and Raja. What this might be is not clear for suggestions vary. Anyway she and Raja can always put up with their friends in east Simla though that is very far—I am investigating further.

I am dead tired and so I am going to sleep now. The bed is soft and comfortable.

Love,

Papu

## 5. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
4.7.45

Darling Indu,

I hope you have recovered sufficiently and are not taking any risks about travelling. I suggested to you to come up here for a couple of days but then I thought this would mean additional fatigue. It was hardly worthwhile though I would love to see you. Therefore do as you please about it. Keep me informed of your movements. I am wholly uncertain about my programme. It looks as if I shall have to stay here till the 17th or thereabouts.

I wired to you to send me with Raja and Betty a new copy of Ranjit's translation of the *Rajatarangini*. I wonder if you found it. If not in Allahabad, it is just possible that you may find it at a bookseller's in Delhi.

I am writing this in some haste. My thoughts are with you. I hope you will be quite fit soon and will find Rajiva thriving.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

I shall make every effort to go to Kashmir and I think I shall succeed some time or other. It has become almost an obsession with me!

Love,

Papu

## 6. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Simla

5-7-45

Darling Indu,

You must be in Delhi today if your old programme holds. I am glad you decided to rest there for a day or two *en route* to Kashmir.

Your letter of the 2nd reached me yesterday. No, I don't worry about you. I think you can look after yourself and also that your health is generally sound enough. Of course some care has to be taken.

I suppose you will move away from Srinagar immediately to a cooler place. Somebody the other day offered his Gulmarg hut to me and I was thinking of informing you of it. But I have completely forgotten now who he was.

I have received a telegram from Yunus from Gulmarg saying that he wants to see me and proposing to come here if my stay here is prolonged. I have wired to him in reply that my stay here is of uncertain duration and it would be better for us to meet later in Kashmir. It is not worthwhile for him to come all the way here. I am kept pretty busy here from morning till late at night — committee meetings, delegations from innumerable groups, meeting people from all over India after three years or more &c. As I wrote to you, it is likely that I shall have to stay here till the 16th or so. As soon as I am free here, I shall go straight to Kashmir — so I intend — At first I shall go inevitably to Srinagar and then to whatever place you and Rajiva may be in.

Bijju Bhabhi has written to me inviting me to stay with her and suggesting that I shall have a quiet time there. Well, of course I shall stay with her in Srinagar but I was under the impression that her house with its crowds of guests and visitors was hardly a quiet retreat. Anyway I do not intend to remain in Srinagar more than a day or two to

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

begin with. I should like to get away to a quieter place as soon as possible. Later, on the eve of my return, I might spend another 2 or 3 days in Srinagar. I should like to have no public or semi-public engagements to begin with. These should be reserved for the end of my visit and should only be fixed up after consultation with me. Please tell Sheikh Sahab of this and also that I am looking forward to meeting him. After I meet him and have a talk, we shall fix up things.

The Gurez Valley trip attracts me greatly. If you can fix it up it would be a good thing. But I am not going anywhere without you. I have no idea how long I shall be staying in Kashmir. Or put it at a fortnight. If I can pull it out to 3 weeks I shall be happy, but the difficulties in my way are obvious.

I do not know Betty's and Raja's programme and how long they will stay in Kashmir. It would be good if they came. I shall see to it in any event that I have as much of you as possible.

I wish I had left more money for you. These long journeys must cost a lot. I am now enclosing a cheque for 400/- in your favour. You can cash it through Braj Kumar in Delhi or in Srinagar.

In spite of the rush and hustle here I am feeling a little better. The improvement would be more marked if I did not keep very late nights. That is really my fault. Finding no time to meet old friends in the day time I ask them at night and then talk on.

I hope Hari is going with you with my extra clothes.

Love,

Papu

## 7. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Simla

July 7, 1945

Darling Indu,

I suppose you are somewhere on the way to Kashmir — probably round about Pindi. I hope you have not been silly enough to send Hari here. Not only do I not require him here but he is likely to be rather a burden. Keep him with you till I come. And come I will in spite of the obstacles and impediments in the way. My repeated statements about going to Kashmir, often reported in the press, have convinced not only

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.



me but others also that I shall ultimately go there. Everyone asks me when I am going. Even Lady Wavell put me this question when I went to have tea with her. But what is alarming is that people intend to follow me to Kashmir — all manner of odd people whom I hardly know. I am just coming back from dinner with Dr. Khan Sahib at the Cecil. There I met a young ruler of a small State who informed me that he had prepared a 15-year plan to socialize his State and eliminate himself, more or less! He wanted to consult me about it and as I was busy here he would come to Kashmir where he imagined that I would have plenty of time to devote to the affairs of his State.

I have received your letter from New Delhi. Unless the unforeseen occurs I should be free to leave Simla within ten days — say the 17th. Add a day or two more if you like to provide for contingencies — I intend going straight to Kashmir from here, without stopping anywhere *en route*. I might reach Srinagar on the 22nd or 23rd according to this. I cannot be sure of the date but I just do not see how it can go beyond the 25th at the latest. This has nothing to do with the outcome of the conference here. In either or any event I shall try to get away for two or three weeks. More time I cannot find for I shall have to come back for the A.I.C.C. If I stay on for the A.I.C.C. then I shall get caught in a round of activities and all ideas of going to Kashmir will have to be given up. So I shall have to go direct from Simla. No date has so far been fixed for the A.I.C.C.

In Kashmir I am in your hands. I want to be with you all the time or nearly all the time. If it suits you, you can arrange an excursion into the Gurcz Valley. I have heard so much about it that the desire to go there is strong. I understand it is a week's trip. I have a growing fear that wherever we may go, many people will want to accompany us. How to deal with them is a problem. Sheikh Sahab, I suppose, will insist on making the arrangements and it is difficult to refuse him. He will do everything on a sumptuous scale and we shall move about in state with crowds of companions and camp-followers. In so far as this can be reduced, an attempt might be made to do so. But I fear it cannot be wholly avoided and we shall have to reconcile ourselves to it.

I am told that there has been a major governmental upset in Kashmir and many high officials have resigned. I do not know much about it but I imagine that Bijju Chacha will also be involved. I do not know how this might affect his plans. Anyway I do not want to come in the way of these plans.

I sent you a letter to New Delhi enclosing a cheque for Rs. 400. I hope you received it.

Ram Ratan Gupta of Cawnpore turned up today and presented me with a Parker '51' pen and a Parker pencil to match. It is embarrassing to receive these gifts but it is even more difficult to refuse them. I am writing this letter with this pen — my first use of it. It is not completely satisfactory being on the hard side. Still it is near enough to my style of writing to be of use.

I had a letter from Betty from Delhi. As usual she has warned me against the activities and machinations of various people. Well, it is always useful to be warned but it does amuse me to find how Betty takes me to be a simple kind of person who can be misled by any odd person. Betty also possesses the very feminine trait of believing everything she hears and then repeating it to others. The kind of life I have led, often restricted and isolated as it has been, has brought me in contact with all kinds of people and if I have not yet developed some capacity to measure them up, I never will. I have found it a good rule to look for the better side of every person — and there is always a better side — and to avoid being influenced by vague rumours. I have sometimes been mistaken but the mistake has not troubled me for long. But the other kind of mistake — to condemn a person on insufficient data — hurts for a long time. We Indians are a terribly censorious people, or perhaps most people everywhere are made that way.

Tonight, dining with Dr. Khan Sahib and others at the Cecil, I watched the dancing for a while. It was a kind of spectacle I had not seen for some years. I found it thoroughly depressing. There was hardly a single Englishman or Englishwoman who could be called distinguished looking or possessing good looks. Poor dresses, poor looks, poor dancing. Some Indians — men and girls danced. The girls in their saris were more graceful and a few were good looking. But their dancing was even more stilted and unnatural. I have seldom witnessed a more boring and less inspiring sight than this dancing at the Cecil. I suppose it gives some kind of psychological satisfaction to those who indulge in it, or at any rate the feeling that they are in the swim and behaving as society folks are supposed to behave. What a terribly dull life!

I am being constantly invited to meals by people I know and do not know. So far I have successfully avoided these invitations.

I am feeling sleepy now. It is 1.20 a.m. on the 8th and I have still to read the day's papers. I cannot find time for this in the course of the day.

Love,

Papu

8. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Simla

8-7-45

Darling Indu,

Your letter of the 6th from Delhi. You must now be in Srinagar. It surprises me that you should almost have decided in your mind that I was not going to Kashmir. Nothing that I have written or said was meant to give this impression. I usually stick to my programmes unless something in the nature of an act of God — as legal contracts say — intervenes. I certainly intend going to Kashmir and I shall be mightily surprised if I do not get there. Raja and Betty being used to changing their programme probably do not realise my constancy in this respect. So the question of your sending Hari back does not arise as I shall require him there.

As for my suitcase containing warm clothes it will have to be sent by messenger to Simla. Probably that will be most convenient. I hope it is ready packed otherwise it will be almost impossible to get the necessary things together. I am writing to Feroze accordingly.

I hope you have had no difficulty in fixing up arrangements at Pahalgam or elsewhere.

Love,

Your loving  
Papu

Today being Sunday Naresh<sup>2</sup> came to see me — Upadhyaya fetched him. The younger brother could not come as he was under quarantine. There had been a case of measles in his home. I made Naresh ride with me to Manor Villa where Bapu is staying. This was his first ride on horseback. I like the boy.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Naresh Katju.



## 9. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
13.7.45

Darling Indu,

The Simla business is drawing to a close and I should be free to depart within a few days. I cannot yet fix a date. It may be the 16th or 17th. Iftikhar has promised to make arrangements for me and he will probably fix up a car from Pindi to Srinagar. I shall go straight from here to Lahore, spend the day there and then proceed by the night train to Pindi. I ought to be with you by the 19th or latest 20th. I shall of course wire to you. My programme after arrival in Srinagar depends entirely on you. The length of my stay is uncertain. Bidhan Roy has examined me and insists on my spending a month there, or at least 3 weeks. I shall try to put in 3 weeks but I am not wholly the master of my time.

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

## 10. To Edward Thompson<sup>1</sup>

Gulmarg  
12.8.45

My dear Edward,

Your air letter has reached me here in Kashmir. I have been spending much of my time during the last 3 weeks in trekking in the mountains, rather cut off from the world of newspapers, radio, post & telegraph offices. I felt I must get away somewhere where crowds and our usual problems did not pursue me. I feel much better for the change. Indira is with me.

I am happy to learn that you are much better and that you will probably be coming to India soon. Of course you must come to Allahabad and stay with us — if for no other reason than in your capacity as a P.E.N. delegate. I am one of the vice-presidents of the Indian P.E.N.!

1. Edward Thompson Papers, N.M.M.L.



WITH INDIRA GANDHI AND NAWABZADA FARID OF N.W.F.P.,  
SPINAGAR, AUGUST 1945



WITH HIS GRANDSON, PAHALGAM, AUGUST 1945



Wavell told me that my letter<sup>2</sup> to you, which I sent through him, had been mislaid. He showed me what you had written to him. Suspecting that letters from prison often go astray I had kept a copy and, fortunately, I have just found it in my papers. I am having it typed and this will be sent to you by air mail separately. The letter, as you will notice, exhibits the mood which one usually develops in prison. It takes one some time after release to adjust oneself to the new life. I have been trying to do so.

I am writing this in somewhat of a hurry (I am going down from Gulmarg soon) as I want to catch you before you leave England. If there is delay in your leaving I shall write more fully. I expect to leave Kashmir on the 21st and, after brief halts on the way, to reach Allaha-bad about the end of the month.

Get well soon.

Ever yours,  
Jawaharlal

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 572-3.

## 11. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Nathiagalli  
22.8.45

Darling Indu,

After an uneventful journey down the Jhelum Valley I reached Murree soon after 5 p.m. yesterday. The usual crowds and the usual Punjab indiscipline — a kind of public sea where people were jammed in and large numbers of others tried to get in. Then a public meeting with a heavy mist surrounding us. Dinner at Mehr Chands<sup>2</sup> — a buffet affair — with about 50 or 80 guests. And then coffee at the Cecil Hotel, where I was staying, with Chaman Lal and Helen and some others including 2 Polish officers and an R.A.F. man — also a young woman who apparently sings for the troops and sings rather well. She came and offered to sing for me. And so to bed, after reading the papers, at 2 a.m.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Mehr Chand Khanna (1897-1970); Finance Minister, N.W.F.P., 1946-47; migrated to India after partition; adviser, Ministry of Rehabilitation, 1948-54; Minister of Rehabilitation, 1954-62; Minister for Works, Housing and Rehabilitation, 1962-64.

This morning some other engagements. We — Badshah Khan, Khan Sahib and I and others — started at 11.30 by car. The road is supposed to pass through very beautiful scenery but a heavy fog, of the thick London variety, prevented our seeing anything. We passed various *gallis* and some dak bungalows beautifully situated — Reached Nathiagalli at 2 p.m. met Dr. Khan's family & Wali<sup>3</sup> & Tajo — Lalli is not here.

We leave on the 24th morning for Abbottabad — Taxila — Pindi.

I spoke to Badshah Khan about the young man who called himself Mahesh Babu and who saw us in Srinagar day before yesterday. You will remember I asked you to introduce him to Yunus. Badshah Khan said that he would like to help and to see what he can do in regard to various cottage industries. Of course, I told him that I could not say anything about his work from personal experience. He was however prepared to try him for a while on the understanding that if he did not prove useful or otherwise did not fit in, he would have to go.

So will you give this information to Yunus as well as to Mahesh. If Mahesh wants to come to the Frontier to work here experimentally he can do so. Yunus can then give him directions as to where to go to get in touch with Badshah Khan. Also a note for Badshah Khan.

I propose to be in Lahore on the 25th to 27th, in Delhi on the 28th and 29th. In Delhi I shall stay with Ratan & Rajan. I ought to reach Allahabad on the 30th or at the latest on 31st.

Love to Rajiva,

Your loving  
Papu

3. Abdul Wali, second son of Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

## 12. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Lahore  
Aug. 25/26, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have just returned from an odd and exciting experience and I am a little tired. Yet because of the excitement I have gone through I am wide awake and am therefore writing to you.

The frontier visit was pleasant in spite of certain rather depressing factors. It was good to meet old friends. As one grows older oneself

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

one appreciates all the more the friends of one's youth. The depressing factor was really nothing new. It was the realization once again how immature human beings are and how they fall out on the most trivial of matters. Temperament is usually more powerful than logic. Yet my visit I think did good all round. Whether temporary or fairly permanent I do not know.

From Nathiagalli we went to Abbottabad, Havelian and Haripur. And then to Taxila. Badshah Khan and Dr. Khan and several others accompanied us. Near Taxila, at Wah there is an old Moghul garden with a spring and a small pool of wonderfully clear water. I had intended having a dip there but as no one else was prepared for this, I had to refrain also. We fed there, our host being Sikandar Hyat's brother who owns the place. Chaman Lal, Helen and some others joined us there. Then we visited Taxila and I spent over two hours there and yet did not see some of the excavations.

And so to Pindi where a vast meeting of about 100000 was waiting for us. The night journey to Lahore was a troubled one but not so bad as it might have been. On arrival at Lahore the first news I heard was of Iftikhar's resignation and the statement he had issued.<sup>2</sup> This was not unexpected and yet the time and the manner of doing it hurt me and rather upset me. As happens with me, my face developed a tired look and a sense of weariness stole over me. However the day's programme kept me busy. I paid a short visit to Chand's flat and found that Nani had been, and was still, rather ill. She is suffering from anaemia, which in her case is a bad sign. I am going there again tomorrow.

Tonight there was a public meeting — and what a meeting! Among my vast experience of large crowds, I do not think I have ever seen anything like it. I imagine there were 200000 people there, and there might well have been 250000. The loudspeakers of course broke down and even the platform partly collapsed. Fear invaded the people round about the platform on it and this is an infectious affair. I stood on a table on the collapsing platform and surveyed the seething mass of humanity. Many people urged me to go but I refused to budge and said that I would not leave the crowd and would make a speech even if I had to stay all night. Men & women & children fainted and I was told that two children had died (this is probably not true). But I was in

2. On 24 August 1945, Iftikharuddin resigned from the presidentship of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee because his concern for Congress-League unity was not shared by his party colleagues. In his statement he said: "I resign from the presidentship with the belief that I shall be able to serve as an ordinary worker more effectively than as an office-holder."



a savage mood and said I did not care what happened; I would stick on. Piteous appeals were made to me to go but I was harsh in my replies and was especially hard on poor Ifty. Something of my morning's irritation, I think, induced me to behave in this manner. Yet I was perfectly cool and laughing at the fear and discomfiture of others. How hard and cruel I was! I was myself surprised at this savage aspect which revealed itself unawares. Ultimately I jumped into the crowd and was pushed and tossed about by it. I carried a large part of the crowd away and delivered several short speeches at various places in the midst of the crowd. I saw that the women — there were many of them — went away. Then I returned to the platform — again went down and returned. These excursions led to a thinning of the crowd and at last only about 50000 remained. Then I addressed these people from the platform (without a loudspeaker). I spoke for a good while and have grown rather hoarse.

Having a sense of the crowd and being popular with it, I had no great difficulty in dealing with it, though it was a terribly tiring business. Anyway my staying on and speaking at the end at some length (and briefly at various places) pleased the crowd and lessened its irritation. How easily such a crowd can become a savage & aggressive mob! But, being expert at the job, I managed to add to my popularity with it.

And so we finished after midnight and we returned with thousands of frenzied people escorting us.

The experience and excitement of all this worked away my irritation and I feel better.

And now I must go to bed.

Your loving  
Papu

A lady in Nathiagalli gave me a rather pretty gold bangle on *Raksha bandhan* day.

### 13. To Richard Walsh<sup>1</sup>

3/9/45

Dear Mr. Walsh,

Thank you for your cable and letter of July 3rd. This letter has only just reached me. I have been wanting to write to you ever since my

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

release from prison. But all manner of work and engagements have overwhelmed me till I sought refuge in a retreat to the mountains in Kashmir. That did one good but, meanwhile, work accumulated and I am rather frightened at the prospect of dealing with vast numbers of letters.

First of all I must tell you that there is no immediate prospect of my going to America or anywhere abroad. There is far too much work to be done here and I simply cannot run away from it. Of course if any special occasion demanded it, I would make an attempt to go. In the present, however, I see no urgent need for it. I am in no mood to go just to tour about and speak at public or semi-public meetings. The great inducement could of course be to meet old friends. I want very much to go to the U.S. but I have to balance this with the pull of work in India. We are passing through fairly critical times and I would hate to leave the main scene of activity.

Even if later I go to the U.S. I would rather not have a previously arranged fixed programme. I would not like to be tied up. And in no event would I agree to be handed over to a lecture bureau to be displayed in various parts of the country. Having been in prison for long periods I have developed a distaste for anything that binds and constrains me.

About my new book—yes I have written one in prison. I call it *The Discovery of India*, an odd and perhaps misleading name, and yet, I think, an attractive one. What I mean by it of course is the discovery of India by me—my quest for India and what I found. It is an ambitious theme and I fear that I have failed to do justice to it. The book is only in a small part autobiographical; for the rest it is a survey of India's past and present.

I wrote it all out in longhand in prison. I wanted to revise it and get it typed on my discharge but I have been so terribly busy that I have been unable to do so. As soon as a typed copy is ready I shall send it to you. I imagine, however, that the censors will delay it, as is their way.

Presumably the book will be published in England also. In order to avoid delay in publication I am arranging to get an Indian edition published here. This may come out by the end of the year or in January. If this can be arranged, I shall send you the proof copies of this book.

With my warm regards to you and Mrs. Walsh,

Very sincerely yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

# 14. To Frances Gunther<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
Sept. 5, 1945

My dear Frances,

It is good to see your handwriting again and to feel — for your writing makes me feel that way — that you are right near me and having a talk. I got your other notes and of course I knew who they were from and I replied accordingly. You should have given me enough credit for that. But those typewritten cards or sheets were necessarily constrained and cramped your style. This is better. I wrote to you from somewhere in the mountains when I was trekking in Kashmir. Did you get that letter?<sup>2</sup>

I am back now trying hard to adjust myself to the new environment. Not succeeding very well. These sudden changes are trying on the nerves. Crowds pursue me and surround me wherever I go and it becomes frightfully difficult to lead any kind of organised & systematic life. It is heartening to have all the affection but also terribly exhausting.

When will I go to the U.S.? I do not know. But I see no near chance of my doing so. Do you remember writing to me once that I should not go there to join the troupe of exiles. I agreed with you entirely. Does it not follow from this that I should not go there just as an itinerant agitator or propagandist? I would love to go there privately as a private person just to meet friends and wander about the country. But that is impossible. I simply cannot get rid of my non-private capacity. That follows me about in India and it will pursue me abroad. The mere fact of my going abroad is given significance however much I may deny it. And so I am a prisoner, though the bars may not be visible, but bound hand and foot all the same. In India, as elsewhere, urgent and vital problems face us and it is very difficult to run away from them even if I wanted to do so. All this means that there must be an obvious and sufficient reason for me to leave India. After all in a sense I have been away for three years from the Indian scene. I cannot escape my fate.

How I would love to send you that telephone message from La Guardia Air Field. But that, my dear, as so many other things for which we hunger, must wait till the stars are more propitious. Meanwhile, it is sad to think that time passes and we grow older. So many things happen too late.

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Not available.



I have not seen your little book<sup>3</sup> on India though I have tried hard to get it. I read several reviews of it. So do send it. I have come across a few American air force and army men, chiefly in Kashmir, since my release. Also in Delhi.

Your letter is a sad one and I must confess that I do not feel very cheerful myself. The war and all its consequences were bad; the after-effects are likely to be no better though for the present there is some relief from the strain. How immature human beings are and how little capable of controlling events. And yet you talk of one's control of events by one's will, of creating events that one has willed into being. I am no believer in determinism and I do think man can control and create events, though naturally he is limited by many factors. But before man does so with any effectiveness he must become a grown-up man and not an immature child who can only think of the toy in front of him.

Yes, each people has to win its own fight in its own fashion and in following this fashion it goes on blundering and stumbling along. So, I suppose, we in India will stumble and fall and get up again and go ahead. But I do not know why I am writing to you in this strain. I had not intended to, but somehow your letter turned my mind in this direction. What I wanted to write to you was intended to be cheerful. I wanted to tell you how happy I felt to get your letter. I am afraid I have been a poor correspondent, though the fault has not been entirely mine. During the last 58 months I have spent 48 in prison. Yet even during the intervals I could have written to you oftener. You have been often enough in my thoughts. But I do not want to write to you unless I can develop the mood for leisurely writing. That mood seldom finds a chance and I wait and wait for it. You will understand and forgive me. Perhaps I might behave better in future.

I have written a book in prison, an odd book, a melange of subjective fancies and objective analysis. The theme was ambitious and I have not done justice to it. Still there it is and I suppose it will be eventually published; probably it will appear in India first and I shall send you a copy when it comes out. I shall also send a copy of the typescript to Walsh for an American edition. I am dissatisfied with the book as a whole though I think bits of it are good. But then it is really impossible to judge one's own production. I have always an odd feeling about the writing I have done in prison. There is a strangeness

3. *Revolution in India*; it argued that the psychological aspect of the conflict between India and Britain had become the crux of the situation by 1944.

about it, as of something not entirely my own. I recognize it and yet feel that someone else, whom I know fairly well, has done it.

Perhaps one day I shall really turn up at La Guardia Air Field and telephone to you. I shall look forward to the celebration.

Love,

Yours,  
Jawahar

### 15. To Major General H. R. Briggs<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
6.9.1945

Dear Major-General Briggs,

I thank you for your letter of August 28th 1945 and the questionnaire.<sup>2</sup> I have come back to my home after more than three years and I am over-burdened with work and the many intricate problems that face us. It is difficult therefore to find time to answer your questionnaire.

But, apart from this, I have a more basic difficulty. All major problems in India are inter-connected and the solution of one depends a great deal on the solution of the other. This applies to the entire political, economic and other fields of national activity. The proper approach thus is to view the whole problem in all its complexity, to lay down certain objectives and then to plan an advance all along the line. Each particular problem will of course have to be studied separately and in detail but it makes a great deal of difference whether it is considered in isolation or in relation to others. I have been interested in national planning for many years and this has helped me to view all our problems in this perspective.

Because of this approach it is not easy for me to consider any question, even that of defence, by itself and without having in my mind some picture of the political and social organization of the future state, as well as its objectives. Because of this also it has not been usually

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Maj. Gen. Briggs was president of a committee that was enquiring into the future status of the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers in the Indian army. He set his problems in the form of questions and sought Jawaharlal's views.

possible for us to associate ourselves with official committees. Inevitably such committees function within the present framework and think in terms of it, and also ignore to a large extent other related problems.

The question of defence is obviously one of great importance. It is not merely a question of the reorganization of the army but much more so of looking at the problem having in view the latest technical, scientific and international developments. It seems obvious that the whole conception of warfare has changed and is changing rapidly. It is quite possible that armies after the old model may become obsolete and useless in the future, or useful only for certain secondary purposes. The essential part of a defence force may well be a highly trained mechanised force, chiefly relying on the air arm, with subsidiary forces attached to it.

These considerations require a totally different approach from the old one. A mechanised force or an efficient air force can only be built up and maintained on a self-sufficient basis with a background of industrial development and scientific research. Thus the encouragement of scientific research on the widest possible scale and the rapid building up of all the vital and necessary industries (and these cover almost the entire field) become essential preliminaries.

I imagine that, subject to international considerations, the objective to be aimed at in defence is to build up highly efficient mechanised forces, probably limited in numbers, and also to have a well-trained militia, or something like it, on as wide a basis as possible, both for home defence and to serve as a reservoir and a feeder for the mechanised forces.

I do not approve of two grades of officers.<sup>3</sup> This anomaly leads both to resentment and inefficiency. Whatever the future of the Indian army, it should not be based on any discrimination among the officers or in the ranks, and it should attain as high a standard of efficiency as is possible. Two grades of officers are bad for both.

What the Indian army may have to do in the future depends on international developments and the policy of the national state. In any event such an army must be trained and ready for all eventualities.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. One suggestion in the questionnaire was the creation of two grades of officers, i.e., the King's Commissioned Officers type and the subordinate type, the latter with somewhat less pay and responsibilities but otherwise the privileges of an officer.



**16. To Martand Upadhyaya<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad

8-9-1945

Dear Martandji,

I have your letter of the 5th September. Also cheque for Rs. 1000/-. Thank you for this.

As for my next book, I call it *The Discovery of India*. I cannot describe it easily. You will see it when it comes to you. The first essential for a translation is that the translator must be thoroughly acquainted with both languages. I found in some of your past translations that my meaning was not always understood and the translation was quick journalese missing the essence. Naturally I would like the language to be, as far as possible, simple Hindustani. But this should not be an artificial product and should read easily.

The book will be about 500 pages, that is, it will be somewhat smaller than my *Autobiography*.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Sasta Sahitya Mandal Papers, N.M.M.L.

**17. To Krishan Prasad Dar<sup>1</sup>**

3.10.45

My dear Krishanji,<sup>2</sup>

There appears to have been some forgetfulness, from the publisher's point of view, in regards to my *Letters from a Father* in English. A book which is in constant demand is not to be obtained by the general public. I want this matter to be taken in hand immediately. I take it that you are full publishers and no one else shares this job with you regarding my book. Please confirm this. If so then you must function as publishers and not as mere printers. Unfortunately you have no publishing business

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Manager, Allahabad Law Journal Press.

and have no contacts with booksellers etc. It is for you to consider how to get over this. You may, if you like, settle with some well known bookseller or publisher to handle the publishing side of my book. Not Kitabistan. There has been enough trouble there already. The International Book Depot of Poona is a good concern run by reliable people and they would gladly take charge of this business. Please think over this matter and let me know what you propose to do. A publisher cannot sit tight over a book. He has to advertise it, push it and make it easily available to the public.

Please let me have a copy of the contract with the Oxford University Press about this book. I take it this is confined to sale in certain educational areas only.

Have Kitabistan any interest whatever in the book now? I understand that they have continued to sell old copies of the book, but they have not given me any royalty on them.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 13. To V. K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad

My dear Krishna,

...I have your cable enquiring about Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Dr. Zakir Hussain. I have sent a reply. I learnt of their impending departure for London only two days ago through the newspapers. More I do not know. It appears that they are going on some education committee of which Sargent is chairman. It is objectionable for any Indian committee to have an English chairman. But, apart from this, Sargent is a good man and the report for which he is chiefly responsible is a good report and largely based on the basic education scheme which the Congress governments produced. Both Amrit Kaur and Zakir Hussain are friends of Sargent.

Presumably official arrangements for their stay etc. in London will be made by Government. You should certainly see both of them.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts. Undated letter. Written after 11.10.1945.

They are able and worthwhile people. Both of them are intimately associated with Gandhiji and are friends of mine. Zakir Hussain is an eminent educationist and not very much of a politician. Amrit Kaur had a very bad time in prison and internment during the last three years. It was because of the treatment she received that Penderel Moon, who has written some books recently, resigned from the Civil Service. Her brother, Kunwar Dalip Singh, the Senior Judge of the Punjab High Court, retired also partly because of this. Another brother of hers is Raja Sir Maharaj Singh. She belongs to a branch of the Kapurthala family which adopted Christianity. Her name was included in the list sent on behalf of the Congress to the Viceroy at Simla for the Executive Council. I am sure you will like to meet her and she will be able to tell you much about conditions here. Her point of view approximates to Gandhiji's with whom she has been intimately associated.

I sent you yesterday two more packets of manuscript of my new book: *The Discovery of India*.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

## 19. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Delhi  
7.11.45

Darling,

I am sorry the old boy is not keeping up to the mark. These little troubles will occur — I hope it passed off in a day or two.

I have had a pretty heavy time here and feel rather tired. After a quarter of a century I donned a barrister's gown and, oddly enough did not feel uncomfortable in it! But this business of sitting in court all day is about the most boring affair you can think of.<sup>2</sup>

I am off to Bombay. Upadhyaya goes tomorrow night to Allahabad — I am not sure when I shall reach Allahabad — probably the 14th or 15th.

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. As a member of the Defence Committee, Jawaharlal attended the court during the I.N.A. trials in November 1945.



**20. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>**

Bombay  
7.11.45

Darling Indu,

I had a good flight — 5 hours from Delhi to Bombay. We passed over Udaipur and so I can say now that I have seen it, though the vision was a distant one — from 8000 feet or more — Ahmedabad proved a trial for 5000 or 6000 persons collected at the aerodrome and upset all the normal arrangements there. It was an exhausting process, having to deal with them, and the plane was slightly delayed.

I have yet no clear idea of how long I shall have to stay here. As far as I can see I cannot leave before the 13th night and then Betty & others are making a fuss about my not leaving then but staying on for the 14th. Probably I shall leave on the 14th by the night train. That is almost the last train I can take for I have to be in Lucknow on the 17th. I shall spend the 16th in Allahabad. Future programme uncertain. Hope to fix it up before I leave Bombay.

I shall probably go to Poona to meet Babu & Vallabhbai on the 12th.  
Love,

Your loving  
Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

**21. To Rameshwari Nehru<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
10.11.1945

My dear Bijju Bhabi,

Your letter has just come and I hasten to reply to it for if I do not do so now it will get overwhelmed in other papers. I am here for 2 days.

I met S.N. Dhar but did not read his book. I took him for granted because of your recommendation. I did not write a special preface for

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Only an incomplete text is available.

him — I allowed him to reprint what I had written about Kashmir four years or more ago.

Newspaper work, often dull work, often requiring initiative. No one can be a newspaperman unless he has gone through the mill. A new-comer however able must go through it in order to learn the ABC of the business. The *Herald* is being restarted soon and we do not have new-comers to begin with. They clog the machine. I am, however, sending Dhar's application to the Editor and letting him decide. I imagine the most he can do is to keep Dhar's name on his list for future use when the *Herald* has settled down.

22. To P. A. Narielwala<sup>1</sup>

30 November 1945

My dear Pan,

Your letter of the 22nd November. Both Karanjia and Pocha spoke to me about this matter in Poona and because of my being an accommodating person, I agreed to their proposal that they might use the money for a village clinic near Poona. I agree with you in what you say but one cannot always be vocal in such matters and local sentiment has to be considered. Pocha told me that if they had this local clinic they would be able to raise more money for it. So you see that in a sense I have committed myself to this commitment subject to your committee's decision.

Love,

Yours,  
Jawahar

Tell the Princess<sup>2</sup> that I appreciate her message. But fairy princesses should not always remain invisible. It is their function to appear on earth occasionally so that ordinary mortals may see them.

Jawahar

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Princess Niloufer, of Turkish origin, was for some time married to Prince Moazzam Jah, second son of the Nizam of Hyderabad.

23. To V. K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
December 26, 1945

My dear Krishna,

I am not writing to you a political letter. Our politics are too complicated and confused to be compressed in a brief letter. My life becomes increasingly rather tempestuous. I rush about and wherever I go I attract vast crowds. This is exhilarating in its own way but it is also very fatiguing. I get no rest or time to deal with my letters, or private affairs. Indeed I am wholly unable to deal with all my public commitments which seem to increase.

After three weeks of touring I have just come back and three days later I am going to Udaipur for the States People's Conference.

I am anxious to help you in any way I can to enable you to work effectively for India. In this matter, as in some others, I have not got much of a free hand and I hate making suggestions to people which they might not approve of. Nevertheless, I hope that something will shape itself. You have suitably impressed Amrit Kaur, as of course you would, and she is a good advocate. If you stand in need of any money for your public activities I can easily send you some. Do not hesitate to ask for it. That reminds me that I have no idea at all yet of how my royalty account stands. This does not mean that you should send me the balance if any. Hold on to it.

My new book. The complete manuscript has already been sent to you except for the postscript which has not yet been written but which I hope to write within a few days. Some time in January the printed proof formes of the book will be sent to you. I expect the book will be issued from Calcutta about the third week of January. It will run into over 700 pages, though the page is just slightly smaller than the page of my *Autobiography*. It is being priced at Rs. 11/- which, considering everything and war prices, is not too much. An edition of ten thousand is being printed but already there are so many orders that a second edition of ten thousand is being arranged for. In India, as you perhaps know, they do not make plates and this makes it difficult for repeated impressions to be taken.

Walsh will bring out the American edition probably in the spring. He wanted to include Canada in his domain but I told him that I could not agree to this unless you agree. He also wanted to know about trans-

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.



lation rights. I am inclined to let him go ahead with this especially with regard to Spanish, because there is little chance of any translation appearing in Europe as it is constituted today.

I might mention that the typescript I have sent you has a number of errors and omissions.

Could you let me know the address of Bee Batlivala (Mrs. Guy Mansell)?

Have you any information about A.C.N. Nambiar who used to be in Prague and later in Paris? I have had no news of him or about him for the last four or five years.

With all good wishes for the New Year,

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

#### 24. To K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 12, 1946

Dear Dr. Srinivasa Iyengar,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 1st and for your book.<sup>3</sup> Also your article<sup>4</sup> about me in the *Social Welfare*. One of my misfortunes is that I cannot find time to read all the books I want to. I put them by for a more favourable occasion and this collection grows till I have some leisure in prison to read it! To some extent I do steal an hour now and then for reading, especially when travelling. Your book specially I should like to read. I have glanced through it and I find it full of information that I would like to have.

In your article about me you have been extraordinarily generous and rather partial.

With all good wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (b. 1908); Professor of English at Andhra University, 1947-66, and Vice-Chancellor, 1966-68; Vice-President of the Sahitya Akademi and author of several books including a biographical study of Sri Aurobindo.

3. *Indian Contribution to English Literature*.

4. It dealt with Jawaharlal as a speaker and writer.

25. To Richard Walsh<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 12, 1946

Dear Mr. Walsh,

About two weeks ago I sent you a postscript and preface for my new book. I understand that proof copies have also been sent to you.

You asked me in your letter whether you could replace "Ganga" by "Ganges". As I told you you are at liberty to do so. But I would suggest to you that Ganga really fits in better with the context and sounds better. Ganges is too exotic for my ears and somehow it sounds odd in that context. Would it not be possible to put a small footnote explaining that Ganga was Ganges? But this is not an important matter and I leave the decision to you.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

26. To K. T. Shah<sup>1</sup>

14.1.46

My dear Shah,

I enclose a copy of an interesting letter from an American.<sup>2</sup> He is an engineer and a planning expert who was in the American army in India and was in charge of building up their camps. I was impressed by him and his ideas. Knowing and understanding the latest technique, he had some conception of Indian conditions also and wanted to adapt that technique to those conditions. India attracted him and he was thinking of leaving his business in America and coming over to do something worthwhile here. He was not thinking in terms of money.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Albert Mayer (1897-1972); architect and town planner; Planning Adviser, Government of U.P., 1946-60; his designs included New Delhi regional plan and master plans for Greater Bombay and Chandigarh; author of *Pilot Project India* and *Social Analysis and National Economic Planning in India*.

He felt that we should have specific projects for the development of groups of villages in which we could experiment in different localities. His letter and suggestions might be endorsed by your sub-committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Please send him such literature of N.P.C. as you can spare.

**27. To Albert Mayer<sup>1</sup>**

14.1.46

Dear Mr. Mayer,

Thank you for your letter of Dec. 19, 1945. The talk we had in October last interested me greatly as it was in line with my own thinking. We have been too long vague and idealistic in our approach to our problems and it is time that we had specific projects, especially for our village reconstruction — one of the major problems of India. Your letter now, with further definite suggestions, is equally helpful. I agree with what you say and, in so far as I can, I shall try to induce people to function in this way. For the moment we are full of this Provincial elections and probably immediately afterwards other important political problems will absorb our attention. There may be a shift over in government which may enable us to take up some of these schemes. If we can really function in a big way, we should like to have further and detailed help and advice from you. Meanwhile I shall welcome suggestions from you.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.



**28. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>**

14.1.46

My dear Bapu,

I enclose a copy of a letter from an American who was in the American army as an engineer and planning expert. He was in charge of building up a number of camps. He advised the Shriniketan people also and was put in a committee by the Bengal Government. I was considerably impressed by him. He has the knowledge and training for his job, knows the latest technique, and at the same time understands the background of village India. He is attracted to India in many ways (even philosophically) and has got the urge to do something here without thinking in terms of monetary recompense. Because of this urge he may come back to India.

His idea was to experiment in a number of typical localities with village reconstruction and development keeping Indian conditions in view. This was not to consist of just building but of helping in providing a corporate life for the people.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**29. To Brooke L. Winkoop<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
January 20, 1946

Dear Mr. Winkoop,<sup>2</sup>

It was exceedingly good of you to send me the cigarettes and the lighter. I am grateful to you for them as also for the very friendly words accompanying them. It has been a pleasure to me to meet many Americans here and I am only sorry that I did not have greater opportunities

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Lieutenant Colonel; served at the U.S. forces headquarters in Delhi, which Jawaharlal visited on 17 January 1946.

of meeting them. I live in the hope of visiting America one day and if I do so I trust I shall meet you there.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 30. To Amrit Kaur<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 26, 1946

My dear Amrit,

I have received two or three letters from you. As for Mayer's letter, I sent it merely for Bapu's information. There is nothing to be done about it.

I quite agree with you about this business of using blood for writing and *tilak* marks.<sup>2</sup> I have protested repeatedly.

Nan is now due to arrive here early next week. But I shall not be certain till she actually comes.

You will have read about the violent attack on the Communists in Bombay. This is producing an intolerable situation. I have said something about it. I hope Bapu will take this matter in hand.

About the gentleman named Rai Sahib Sonadhar Das Senapati at Shillong and the report of the conversation between him and me, I am not aware of the name of the person but someone did meet me and irritated me exceedingly by his stupidity. The report as given is very incorrect. He asked me why the Congress should not go to Ambedkar and make it up with him. I told him that we are going to do nothing of the kind. Ambedkar had repeatedly insulted the Congress and Congress leaders and unless he apologised we would have nothing to do with him. I certainly did not say that the scheduled castes would not get the political privileges given to them under the Poona Pact. My whole stress was on the fact that Ambedkar had allied himself with the British Government and against the Congress and we could not deal with him

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. In her letter of 17 January 1946, Amrit Kaur stated that "I see you had a sketch given to you which had been drawn in blood. I saw too in the papers that some girls had put the *tilak* mark on your forehead with blood."

because of this. I think I expressed myself forcibly on this issue. I send back to you the report that the gentleman most probably gave you.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

### 31. To V. K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
January 29, 1946

My dear Krishna,

This deals with my book. Publication here has been delayed owing to repeated strikes in printing presses in Calcutta. But I hope it will come out in February. The first edition of ten thousand has been completely sold prior to publication. The second edition is likely to meet the same fate.

Walsh wants to bring out the American edition in spring. As you know, I rely upon your advice in regard to the English edition and I shall abide by your decision. I am not quite clear about your new suggestions except that you propose to bring the book out fairly quickly through a new firm. I leave the matter to you. You will remember of course that the Indian market is covered by the edition here. This presumably includes Ceylon. I have not given the copyright of the book to the Indian publishers. The only permission I have given so far is for the two editions, amounting to 20 thousand copies in all, which are being issued. In case, however, a further impression is necessary for India, as it is likely to be, it is obviously desirable for the present Indian publishers to carry on.

About translations, I do not quite understand what you say. Of course I should like the translation to be from the original and not from an expurgated or abridged edition. As a matter of fact, however, no translation in any European language of my *Autobiography* has so far appeared. Evidently there is little chance of this being done at the London end, and the European market after the War is very limited. Probably the market in America, even for other European languages, is wider today. In regard to Spanish, undoubtedly New York is in a better position to deal with it than London. It seems to me, therefore, that the only way to get things done is to allow Walsh to deal with

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.



Spanish rights at least.

My *Autobiography* has so far been translated into every important Indian language as well as in Chinese and Hebrew. The Hebrew edition came out at Tel Aviv some two or three years ago. Unless you have something definite in view about European languages, is it worthwhile delaying publication of any possible translations?

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

**32. To S. Govind Swaminadhan<sup>1</sup>**

February 17, 1946

Dear Govind,<sup>2</sup>

Your letter of the 5th February. It seems to me that on the whole it is desirable to proceed with K.B. Menon's case<sup>3</sup> in the Privy Council. It is true that people convicted for political offences are likely to be released within the next few months. If it had been a question of applying for leave to appeal to the Privy Council, I would probably have advised that this should not be done now. But as leave has been granted, and when leave is granted there is a strong probability of success, I think we should proceed with the case. You have already spent a good deal of money over it. I do not like leaving a colleague in the lurch and K.B. Menon is a man for whom I have considerable respect.

But one thing in your letter upsets me and this is the fact that Polak is your solicitor. That any person in India should choose Polak for any work at all is beyond me. My own personal reaction is to have nothing to do with any case which Polak is conducting and if it had not been for K.B. Menon I would not have touched this case because

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (b. 1914); started legal practice at the Madras High Court in 1940; served for a time as Advocate-General.

3. K.B. Menon, who was acquitted in the trial court, was convicted on 5 January 1945 of criminal conspiracy against the state by the Madras High Court and was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. His appeal to the Privy Council had been admitted. Govind Swaminadhan suggested in his letter that as Menon would be released in any case because of the prospect of national government it was better to drop the case in the Privy Council.

of Polak. It is not usual or desirable for personalities to be discussed in such matters. But I must let you have my frank opinion about Polak. Politically he has functioned as the agent of the India Office and has run down India in England and America. That itself is sufficient for any honourable Indian to have no dealings with him. As a solicitor I have no high opinion of him. He is extravagant, engages wrong counsel and generally his approach is pro-India Office. Surely it is rather absurd to engage such a man in a political case. It is as if the defence asked the prosecution to supply a counsel.

I do not know what you can do about it now. But if it is at all possible I would change the solicitor. Probably this is not possible at this stage. So we shall have to put up with Polak. In such an event I should make it perfectly clear to Polak that he must consult and abide by V.K. Krishna Menon's advice in regard to the case and especially in regard to any senior counsel that might be engaged. I do not trust Polak in this matter and I do trust Krishna Menon about whom I have a high opinion, both in regard to capacity and general outlook. I suggest to you therefore to write both to Polak and to Krishna Menon on these lines. It may be possible to reduce the estimated expenditure. About this you can consult Krishna Menon. Polak charges for everything. It may be possible for me to help you a little more in regard to funds though I am afraid I cannot send you the balance you seem to require.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## GENERAL

### 1. Janab Reejanal Food Controller Sahab<sup>1</sup>

I have heard much of the doings of the Food Controller's Department. A significant aspect of how this department functions in the U.P. came

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 9 September 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 September 1945.

before me tonight when I attended a meeting of the directors of the *National Herald*. Except for a room or two the whole building is in the possession of the Regional Food Controller, Lucknow region. This gentleman, and I do not know who this august personality is, has put up a huge board of about twenty feet on which is inscribed the following legend in Urdu and Hindi besides English: *Janab Reejanal Food Controller Sahab* and over the board flies the Union Jack. What the *Janab Sahab* does in the Food Department I do not know, but it is evident that he considers himself a pillar of British authority whose chief function is to impress and overawe people by his high position and authority. For the present he is displaying that authority by holding on to the premises of the *National Herald* under the Defence of India Rules.

There is a comic aspect to all this pompous and ridiculous phraseology. It is just too absurd that men who are appointed to do important jobs pose and function in this ridiculous way before the public. No man who thinks of himself as *Janab Reejanal Food Controller Sahab* is fit for that job.

## 2. Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Nearly twelve months ago, in Ahmadnagar Fort prison, we received a heavy, sumptuous volume with an attractive cover, bearing the inscription: *Gandhiji*. Books are doubly welcome in prison, partly because of their scarcity and partly because they have to pass through the formidable barriers of censorship before they can reach us. So we welcomed this book and eagerly looked through its unique collection of good pictures. But I was not very eager to read the various articles and essays it contained, for I had found that birthday volumes usually contained an odd assortment of miscellaneous articles with little to bind them together. Still I read it and, surprisingly, I read it through, for my interest increased with the reading. This was no odd jumble but a well-planned scheme, telling us something worthwhile about the man whom we had known so long and loved and quarrelled with and admired. It gave us a glimpse

1. Introduction written on 2 October 1945 to the second edition of *Gandhiji: His Life and Work*, edited by D.G. Tendulkar, M. Chalapathi Rau, Mridula Sarabhai and Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri.



of the astonishing variety of his interests and the many-sidedness of his activities, and of that vital touch of his that transformed everything he took up and made it spring to life.

But how can a book tell us about him and his strange and wonderful personality that has gripped the millions of India? How can we find out from the printed page wherein lies that elusive and rarest of qualities which makes a man tower above his fellows and leaves its impress on the ages to come? This little man has been and is a colossus before whom others, big in their own way and in their own space and time, are small of stature. In this world of hatred and uttermost violence and the atom bomb, this man of peace and goodwill stands out, a contrast and a challenge. In an acquisitive society madly searching for new gadgets and new luxuries, he takes to his loin-cloth and his mud hut. In man's race for wealth and authority and power, he seems to be a non-starter, looking the other way; and yet that authority looks out of his gentle but hard eyes, that power seems to fill his slight and emaciated frame, and flows out to others. Wherein does his strength lie, wherein his power and authority? Has he drunk somewhere from the secret spring of life which has given strength to India through the ages?

He was seventy-five when this book was prepared and he is seventy-six today as I write this. During this span of years he has done the work of a score or more of vital and energetic persons, adding to it his own particular contribution which none else could give. He is weaker today than he used to be, for nature must have its way, but the old fire is still there, the old charm still works, and those soft eyes of his still remain a strange mixture of flame and cooling water.

We who have known him for these many years in all his moods and activities and tried to fathom what lay behind them, what distant horizon held his eyes, are still far from the end of our search. As ever he eludes us, though outwardly none can be more obvious than he is. Often we do not understand him; we argue with him and get angry sometimes. But the anger passes leaving us rather ashamed of our lack of balance and restraint. Only that pervasive influence remains and he seems to become the vehicle and embodiment of some greater force of which even he is perhaps only dimly conscious. Is that the spirit of India, the accumulated experience of the millennia that lie behind our race, the memory of a thousand tortured lives?

While we have laboured and grown older, a new generation has grown up, also under his spell, but differently. For already to most of them he is a legend, a far-away mysterious figure, whom they have not seen or heard. They have not come into that intimate contact with him and

seen him work those miracles on Indian humanity which we saw a quarter of a century ago. They take these changes for granted, and Gandhi's greatness also for granted.

How will later generations think of him or feel about him? I do not know. But I do know that his name and the stories that will cling to him will inspire our people for long ages to come. The truth is wonderful enough, but inevitably it will be embroidered and added to till something emerges which we would hardly recognize.

But why should we trouble ourselves about the distant future? The present is enough for us, and in the present we still have Gandhiji with us, and it is our privilege to march with him to the free India of our dreams.

### 3. Gandhi Jayanti<sup>1</sup>

The 2nd October has become a significant date in India, for that day was Gandhiji's birthday, 76 years ago. Whatever the day of the month or year, Gandhiji is ever-present in our minds, for he has dominated the Indian scene, moulded our national life and intimately affected innumerable private lives. What we are today, nationally or individually, we are largely because of him, whether we realise this or not.

So, today on his 76th birthday we offer our homage to him and the love and affection which flow to one who has not only been a very great leader, but, at the same time, much more than a leader — a friend, a comrade, a guide — and a sure haven in time of trouble and distress.

1. Message given on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday and published in the newspapers on 4 October 1945.

### 4. Vallabhbhai Patel

On the occasion of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's seventieth birthday I should like to send my greetings and pay my tribute to him. For more

1. Allahabad, 18 October 1945. *The Hindu*, 31 October 1945.

than a quarter of a century now we have been associated with each other and we have had to face all manner of crises and difficulties. These years have been years of trial for all of us in India. Some have shrunk, or faded away, or just remain where they were. A few, a very few, have grown in stature with the years and have left their mark on events, which formed the fabric of history. Among these latter chosen ones, stands Vallabhbhai Patel. Strong of will and purpose, a great organiser, wholly devoted to the cause of India's freedom, he has inevitably roused powerful reactions. Some have disliked him because they could not fall in line with him. But far greater numbers of people have found in him the leader of their choice, and, working with him and under him, have laid the foundations of Indian freedom. To those who have had the privilege of working with him, he has always been a tower of strength, on whose advice they could confidently rely and whose comradeship they valued greatly. So, on this occasion, I pay my affectionate tribute to him and trust that the cause of Indian freedom will long profit by his passionate devotion to it and his outstanding qualities of leadership and organisation.

## 5. The Literatures of India<sup>1</sup>

Friends,

I am a little embarrassed in having to address you, and I feel like an outsider who has strayed into distinguished company. You have done me the honour of making me a Vice President of the Indian Centre of the P.E.N., and I deem it a privilege. But you know very well that my work has been in another direction, and that other activities have absorbed my attention far too much. I am not untouched by, as Sir Mirza put it, "the spiritual paralysis of politics." And yet I have sometimes strayed into other fields by accident, queer and incidental. By accident I became a writer, and so found my way into the P.E.N.

So far as this subject is concerned, I am quite sure that many of you who are present here know much more about it than I do, and could do more justice to it. All I can say is of a very general nature, and

1. Speech at the first All-India Writers Conference, Jaipur, 20 October 1945.  
Printed in *Indian Writers in Council*, published by P.E.N. Centre, Bombay.



perhaps that will be an advantage, because that will mean that I will not inflict myself for too long a time on you. The subject is: "The Development of the Indian Literatures as a Uniting Force." It is a fascinating subject, and I wish I knew more about it except that there is so much to know if one really is to deal with it in any proper style, which is truly beyond me.

The questions that strike me in this connection are these: Are Indian literatures a uniting force or not? Do we take it for granted that they are a uniting force or that they are going to be a uniting force? A superficial survey would, I am afraid, tend to show that they create or might create greater provincialism and erect new barriers to unity. As you know, one of the questions to which frequent reference is made nowadays is the so-called "language question" of India. When we talk about the "language question," we do not refer to the dozen or so languages — the principal languages — of India, but rather to Hindi and Urdu, which are one language with different literary forms drawing inspiration from the same fountain-head. That is the language question! There is hardly any cause, so far as I know, for any conflict between the different languages in their different spheres; but conflict appears sometimes with regard to Hindi or Urdu, though they are but one language with different literary forms.

However, it is interesting to trace the development of Indian languages. For long centuries, they formed a happy joint family, very much dependent on their parent language, Sanskrit — so dependent indeed that they did not grow at all. Later, Persian came into the field, superficially on the top. Persian also affected our languages, but it was a restraining force which would not allow them to grow, since learned people then thought it beneath their dignity to write or speak at select assemblies like this in any language but Sanskrit or Persian. If anything worthwhile was to be written, surely it must be written in Sanskrit, not in Hindi or Bengali or some other dialect; and to some extent that happened later with regard to Persian. People talked or wrote in Sanskrit or Persian. Of course, only a very small circle could talk in those languages, and that is why, I suppose, this divorce between that small circle at the top talking or writing in Sanskrit or Persian and the vast numbers talking in other languages, more living languages, prevented the growth of these latter, and the growth also of our modern literatures.

Now when I say that Sanskrit and Persian were a restraining influence, please do not imagine that I am condemning Sanskrit or Persian at all. Sanskrit is of course something of which every Indian is infinitely and rightly proud. Sanskrit really has performed a great unify-

ing task throughout the ages, and as a unifying force it has obviously been the greatest instrument of the continuity of our culture for thousands of years. There is therefore no question whatever of my condemning Sanskrit.

Persian came late in the field of development of the Indian languages, and yet it played a fairly important part in later centuries, affecting almost all our provincial languages considerably — and thus Persian too became a part of our national heritage. In this way Persian also became a unifying force, at any rate for the upper classes, though not so much for the masses.

Sanskrit, then, pre-eminently, and Persian to some extent, have played a great part in Indian literary life. For my part, I would like large numbers of persons all over India to study Sanskrit, and also Persian, because it is a very beautiful language and is intimately associated, not only with our modern languages but with Sanskrit, which, as you know, is its sister language. Hindi, in fact, is nearer to Persian in some respects than to classical Sanskrit.

However that may be, the fact we should remember is that our provincial languages were controlled by these two aristocratic languages, by Sanskrit especially; and it took a tremendous lot of time for the provincial languages to grow. Gradually, by force of circumstances, out of the hundreds of original dialects, Hindi developed, Bengali developed, Marathi and Gujarati and other languages developed. In the South, of course, there was a different family of languages, which, though different, became through Sanskrit intimately associated with the other languages of India,—and so we have now about a dozen principal languages of India.

One of the remarkable instances of the development of languages in India is provided by Urdu, which grew up and exhibited the interplay of these various forces that flowed in India during the last two hundred years, and became essentially an Indian language, with probably 80 per cent of words that are common to it and Hindi, but of course with a number of Persian words as well. The main difference between Hindi and Urdu is not so much in the vocabulary but in their respective literary forms. The Hindi literary form has been, I suppose, derived directly from Sanskrit — I speak with diffidence in this matter — and all the metaphors and similes and ways of thought and expression have been likewise derived from Sanskrit, and also from the common background of life in India. Thus the literary and other forms of Hindi are Indian no doubt, for no outside influence has permeated them, but they are



very old, and long after they have ceased to have any meaning, some of them are still being used.

Urdu, the same language as Hindi with almost the same vocabulary, with a few words thrown in from outside, developed as an entirely different literary form. Its ways of expression were not derived from Indian life as a rule; its similes and metaphors were derived from Central Asia, or the Caucasus or Iran, and today in our colloquial Hindustani or Hindi so many of these expressions, similes and metaphors, which are not really Indian in origin, have become very common.

As I have said already, the language question mainly deals with Hindi and Urdu. Why there should be so much argument and so much heat and passion, I do not know. But, of course, it is now hardly a question of language. It has become a question of selection of a common language for India, and that is why, perhaps, there is so much heat and passion. It has become a political question in a way, or rather, in a way politics affects the question very much.

The result is obvious. In Hindi and Urdu we have formed certain literary devices, or have certain sophisticated patterns, which attract those who are orthodox. But these devices and patterns have lost their vitality or popular appeal, and must progressively grow more and more stale in spite of a certain beauty in them, because those forms are wholly unconnected with the life of the common people. They remain the same, oblivious to the changing environment. That, of course, applies not only to Hindi and Urdu but to so many aspects of our life. We are sticking to ancient forms so much in our social life, sometimes without any perceptible sense in those forms, that some of our activities are a puzzle even to people just outside our province in our own country. And language, after all, is something which reflects the life of the people. If the life of the people is confined to a narrow circle of old-fashioned forms, then inevitably their language also is bound to be like that. And it is no use blaming the standard of this or that language, if that language became isolated from the life of the people. I refer only to the literary language, because the popular languages of this time revealed their vitality in popular songs, folk songs, and the rest. Though these popular songs were quite vital in their own way, they had no chance of gaining importance in the centres of learned people for, say, a hundred years. In our popular languages we find folk songs, ballads, poems, etc., while the prose works were limited to Sanskrit or Persian. Every serious work was, in fact, written in Sanskrit or Persian. But the popular languages flourished among the common people and in the households. So this divorce between the language of the common



people and the language of the learned persons has had, I suppose, a very harmful effect on the growth of our languages. That divorce, in a sense, has had its harmful effect, not only on those languages, but on life itself. Many of our ills in India, I think, are probably the result of that. Well, anyhow these popular languages grew, in spite of all the obstructions and the various influences restricting their growth, because life has to grow. But they grew so slowly, and in fact much of their growth has taken place in poetry, in which some of our languages are very rich. Almost all the growth of these our Indian languages has taken place during the last two hundred years or less — here, again, I am subject to correction — and especially their literatures are of recent growth.

Now the growth of these provincial languages has not, so far as I know, tended at all towards disunity. To some extent, no doubt, it may have accentuated a certain provincialism, or given a little push to provincial culture. A Bengali is very rightly proud of his Bengali language, Gujaratis of their Gujarati, Maharashtrians of Marathi, and so on. They have their legitimate prides, but I do not think that there is any conflict between this feeling and the larger feeling of national identity, because the whole basis of India's thought, as I know it, has been never a mere regimentation of people's ideas, but of unity plus diversity, plus variety. Therefore the two do not conflict, because each province, each linguistic area, taking pride in its own past cultural achievements, realises that it is but part of a larger whole. In the past, the cultural unity of India was maintained, not only by one language, Sanskrit, but also by a special philosophy which was common to the whole of India. The old philosophical outlook was later on superseded to some extent at least, and therefore I feel that it is not now strong enough to be a unifying force to the extent, to the degree, it was in the past. Other things have happened. Possibly, the unifying force today would be, not so much national but something more international, something which is common to all nations,— which, again, would not mean the submergence of the national identity in its entirety, but rather the two existing together.

I do not personally see any need to answer the questions which I put at the beginning. I do not see anything tending towards disunity or towards real essential separatism in the growth of provincial languages in India. There is also another factor to consider. In fact, if I may quote the instance of Rabindranath Tagore, it is extraordinary how a man like Tagore who wrote in the Bengali language influenced every other language in India, Hindi certainly, and also the other languages. It shows how these cultural giants grow across provincial barriers. If

one language grows, it surely helps others to grow. It does not hinder the others. It does not come into conflict with them. That is my chief grievance with those people who fight and argue about Hindi and Urdu. I have no doubt in my mind that if Hindi grows rich it will help Urdu, and if Urdu grows rich it will help Hindi.

I am quite sure at the same time that Hindi and Urdu are bound to grow nearer to each other, not because you and I may like it or not like it, but because circumstances are forcing us to develop them as a common language. It seems to me a sheer waste of energy that these champions of Urdu should so strongly object to Hindi influence, and *vice versa*.

Therefore, I do feel that this renaissance of our provincial languages that has taken place is a thing which helps towards unification, and can never be a destructive factor in India. But apart from the language question, it depends again on the background of politics as they develop in India, because languages will be affected by them. For example, there is the Pakistan controversy. Suppose, for a moment, that Urdu becomes the official language in Pakistan and Hindi in the rest of India. If that leads to the destruction of Indian unity, it is not the fault of the language but of certain arguments on the political front that are taking place in India. Languages by themselves, I am convinced, are not a destructive factor, not at all a factor leading to disunity, partly because the languages are akin to each other and the growth of one helps to build up the others, and anyhow they are not going to hinder each other's growth.

Apart from this question of politics behind them, ultimately it all depends mainly on whether we have some kind of a common philosophy, common ethical standards, common artistic standards. If they differ greatly, then those divergences may show themselves in our languages and may lead to unfortunate consequences. If there are vital differences or fundamental differences in our philosophy of life, then the barriers between nations will remain high. If we have certain standards of conduct in common, we can get along amicably, even if we may differ physically, spiritually and artistically. If not, I can only guess what the future is going to be. I am not quite competent to know for certain which will triumph, the good in life or the evil in life.

One thing more before I finish my half hour, and that is this: in literature everything depends on how much freedom there is to function. Freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of occupation, and freedom generally to function as we believe, are all essential for the growth of literature. The slowness in the development of many of our



languages is largely due to the absence of political freedom. Lack of political freedom comes in the way of all progress. But even in a politically free India, if there is no freedom of speech and expression, then it can only be an obstruction in the way of the growth of our languages and it may even lead to unhealthy and disuniting forces growing up. Restrictions on freedom of speech and expression will prevent the languages from affecting the minds of the people at large. That means that you are creating barriers to their self-expression, that you are separating some people at the top from the vast masses at the bottom and thereby creating a select coterie which functions in an artificial atmosphere. There is nothing more dangerous than this idea of authority. Personally, I rebel against that idea in all its phases. In this connection, I was surprised at the whole body of the P.E.N. standing up when a princely message was read this morning, even though it may be in accordance with the traditions of the State.

So it seems to me that the very essence of our growth is this essential freedom, political freedom, because the other types of freedom depend on this. Along with political freedom, there must of course be freedom of speech and expression. Also, the words that we use, the language that we use, should keep in touch with changing conditions. We are a conservative people and we still stick to false values. This sticking to outmoded values obstructs the growth of one's culture. It has already done us immense harm. Sanskrit lost its popularity because it did not keep in touch with the life of the people. One reason why provincial languages and literatures are more vital today than they were before is because they went back to the life of the people and drew inspiration from it. That, again, is another reason why they should develop as a uniting force, because the life of the people in India, taken as a whole, does not differ greatly. The difference—such as it is—is at the top. If you once go down to the large masses, you come to something that is common,—whether you express it in this language or in that language does not matter.

Well, now I leave it to more learned persons to continue this discussion.



## 6. Tej Bahadur Sapru<sup>1</sup>

From my childhood onwards I have known Tej Bahadurji. Sometimes we were closely associated, at other times our contacts were infrequent and our respective paths took us in different directions. I remember him in my boyhood as a rising star both in law and public life. I remember him also as a senior ever indulgent and helpful to a junior lawyer. But though law claimed some of my attention then, my mind wandered frequently to other fields, and to Tej Bahadurji I looked, in common with many a young man of my generation, for help and guidance in both law and public activity. How often we used to go to his house in the long summer evenings to talk to him and to listen to him, for he has always been a good conversationalist and a charming host. And in my eagerness for action in the political field we used to urge him to take the lead of the youth who were bubbling over with new ideas and rather contemptuous of conservative and static age.

The still waters of our political life began to flow again with a new speed. We passed through rapids and whirlpools and rushing torrents and our individual rafts parted company for a long while. But from time to time they again drew near to each other and though there had been marked differences in our political approach and activities, there was always the same friendly look in his eyes, the same warmth of affection, the same generosity and hospitality.

Both of us grew older, and with the passage of years and the accumulation of layer upon layer of experience in the hard school of life, we changed. Politically and in many other ways our thinking and action were still apart from each other, but we drew nearer and old bonds were renewed and new bonds were added to them. More and more I began to realise that while politics and economics were important, the essential and basic foundations of a man's character were still more important. In the men and women I knew I began to search for these basic characteristics, for uprightness and straightness, for sincerity and certain nobility of bearing in life's tortuous journey.

Tej Bahadurji was and is a very eminent lawyer and jurist; he was a scholar taking delight in the literatures of the past and present, himself an embodiment of that synthesis of cultures which India is always

1. *Tej Bahadur Sapru: Profiles and Tributes*, edited by K.N. Raina and K.V. Gopala Ratnam. This tribute was given for a collection made in 1945 to honour Tej Bahadur Sapru on his seventieth birthday. The book was not published till 1971, in deference to his wishes.

aiming at; he was an elder statesman with a certain ripeness of judgment. But more than all this he was a good friend on whom one could always rely, and a man straight and true, when so many about us are neither straight nor true. Even though he had grown older, there was always the freshness of youth about him, and on his face there was a welcoming smile for every comer. People admired him for his success in many fields of activity, but it was not admiration that counted so much as the affection he evoked in others. To young or old he has always been a comrade, and, because of this, young and old have gone to him and been refreshed by his company.

And so today on the eve of the seventieth anniversary of his birth, I pay my tribute of homage and affection to him.

## 7. Art and Life<sup>1</sup>

Art, if it does not spring up from the strength of our nation, is a lifeless art. If it has no connection with the problems and realities of life, it is useless and dead like the pictures of women in the Ajanta caves.

An artist with a living mind can produce art full of life. An artist with a dead mind will produce only lifeless art. Art, which cannot grapple with and face the great problems of our age, cannot be helpful in our life. The main function of art is not only to please the eyes, but to guide men in the struggle for existence.

I am bitterly against the present system of teaching art in schools. I have seen my pictures hanging on the walls in schools. If my face had been as ugly as depicted in those pictures, I would have committed suicide.

Our people are living in the most wretched conditions. They have been brought up in an atmosphere in which aestheticism is unknown. Leaving aside the question of poor labourers, the people of the middle class are living a most contemptible life.

The houses of the taluqdars of Lucknow make me feel most disgusted. These people have a knack of doing things wrongly which can be done in a right way. The cities in this country are in a most miserable condition. It is no fault of the members of the municipalities. They know nothing about aestheticism.

1. Inaugural speech at an art exhibition, Lucknow, 17 November 1945. From *The Leader*, 19 November 1945.

In foreign countries art galleries and museums are built up and children in these countries are brought up in an atmosphere of art and culture. Nothing is done in this country in this direction. Poverty and the most helpless and wretched life which our countrymen are living have so much sapped out our energy that we are unable to create any art. There are thousands in this country who have intellect and competence to be successful in many spheres of life including art and literature, but their energy is frittered away in the struggle for winning their bread. There is something wrong with the very basis of our society.

The problem of producing creative energy in this nation is one of the most difficult questions facing us today. When the creative energy is lessened the nation becomes weak in every respect. The great artists in our nation have gone and only the imitators remain. The greatest problem facing us today is how to bring life to our lifeless nation which may produce creative energy in our artists.

We must wake up and our art will wake up with us. The whole of India will rise from the slumbers of the centuries. If the nation advances then art will not lag behind.

## 8. Demonetization<sup>1</sup>

**Question:** What is your view on the ordinance<sup>2</sup> demonetizing the currency notes of higher denominations?

**Jawaharlal Nehru:** I have never even seen a 10,000-rupee note. Have you seen one? Ask those who are affected by the ordinance.

1. Comment to the press, Delhi, 16 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 January 1946.
2. Currency notes of the value of Rs. 500, Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 10,000 ceased to be legal tender from 12 January 1946.

## 9. On the Demands of Postal Employees<sup>1</sup>

Among the public servants few are more deserving of just and equitable treatment than the Postal and Railway Mail Service employees. They

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 5 February 1946. *National Herald*, 6 February 1946.



perform an essential service with efficiency and hard work, and yet their rewards are few.

A crisis has now arisen in their ranks. There is a possibility of a strike.<sup>2</sup> Any strike which interferes with an essential public service should be avoided as far as possible. But if the postal employees owe a duty to the public, the public and the Government also owe a duty to the postal employees. They have to examine their grievances and remedy them when justice is on their side.

The present crisis has not taken shape suddenly. Behind it lie years of effort and repeated demands as conditions became harder. These demands resulted in the appointment of a postal inquiry committee in December 1944, but the report of this committee has not yet been published and no steps have been taken in regard to any recommendations it may have made. This is a strange procedure and the employees are justified in thinking that the report has been suppressed because it favoured them.

I am not in a position to go into their demands, but from such information as I possess, it appears to me that they are overworked and underpaid. It is obviously the duty of the Government to publish the report of the inquiry committee. In any event it is unwise and highly improper to allow the situation to deteriorate. In such a situation a fair and impartial arbitration is the obvious course to adopt. I hope that both the Government and the postal employees will agree to this, and thus avoid a crisis.

2. The Federation of Postal and Telegraph Unions had notified the Government that the employees of the Posts and Telegraphs Department would go on strike from 24 March 1946 if their demands, which included revision of pay scales and leave and pension rules, were not met.

## 10. The Newspapers and the Common Man<sup>1</sup>

I have been caught by this conference at an unfortunate moment. I am so tired and weary, because of incessant travelling and speaking in

1. Inaugural address to the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, Allahabad, 16 February 1946. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 17 February and *National Herald*, 17 and 18 February 1946.

the countryside during the last ten days, that my mind is benumbed by the overwhelming experience. I have addressed huge gatherings at many places and this experience has been terrifying. I have come in communion with large numbers of people and seen at close quarters the problem of Indian poverty as it exists. I have moved about in the areas where the influence of newspapers is not felt because no newspapers are read except occasionally, and that too, only Hindi and Urdu newspapers. You sometimes forget the fact that what you print in newspapers do not reach the large numbers of people in the country and the reverse fact is also true that you seldom publish anything about these large numbers. You give publicity to the news about cities, about prominent politicians and their speeches. You are much too generous in giving publicity to persons like me. There is really precious little in the newspapers about the masses of India, their economic and social conditions and their poverty.

Rural India is really forgotten and not thought of at all. There are casually some editorial articles on the poverty of India. Even in cities the chief function of news agencies or reporters appears to be to go to half a dozen prominent individuals, get statements from them and send them for publication. It is necessary that you should have trained people who can go to the countryside, to the slums, and study social conditions as big newspapers do in other countries.

I do not say that you wish to ignore the rural areas, but there is nobody to report them. You have one or two news services and a few correspondents scattered about chiefly in big towns. Thus the picture that you draw is not a picture of the whole of India. When one goes to rural areas and sees signs of utter poverty and degradation, one is shocked, and then one realises that the problems of the day are essentially the problems of these vast masses of human beings and not those about whom you write leading articles.

I have watched the beginning of the conference from a distance. I was much interested in it. I think that the conference is a good and right move and an inevitable development in the life of newspapers in India. Many of the things that you did or decided to do are not to my liking. I think that you sometimes wobbled when a stricter course might have been more befitting to the dignity of the press and the dignity of India. Nevertheless, I realise that you have had your own difficulties, and you have them still.

Generally speaking, a newspaper carries weight. It carries weight if it has an individuality and some kind of a crusading spirit. If it has not got these, it merely expresses the views of some individuals which



have some effect of course, but not the type of effect which a newspaper ought to have. Perhaps this is also largely due to the fact that newspapers progressively become huge industries — not only individual industries but soon they reach the next stage of development, perhaps an inevitable stage, although an undesirable one. That is, they become big combines starting a chain of newspapers and dictating policies often detrimental to the interests of the country. Because of these big chains, a newspaper loses its individuality and sanctity which every paper so zealously guards. It tries to preserve some vested interest and presents some particular viewpoint only.

I do not know how it is possible to avoid all this. Nevertheless, it does seem to me a dangerous trend and a harmful development, because a newspaper must, whatever its views might be, maintain a certain integrity about the news. It must give all the news, which are worthy of being given, and it must give them without any distortion.

Your conference can do some good by avoiding any distortion or suppression of news. It seems to me far more dangerous to suppress news than to do anything else in a newspaper.

Unfortunately in India you have to face a great deal of suppression of news by the authorities — a deliberate and definite suppression — and a ban on the publicity of big events. But what is almost equally bad is the sense of fear pervading a newspaper office that if you tell the truth you might get into trouble.

The present atmosphere is not suited for the press which seeks the truth or tries to tell the truth. If you have to function properly you have to contend against it, and you might have to contend against it in future also. One result of the suppression of news is that whenever it comes out it appears in a distorted form — either exaggerated or minimised — and becomes difficult to be believed by people. When people tend to believe that what a newspaper says is only a part of the truth and not the whole truth, that paper is bound to fall in the estimation of the public.

One of the most tragic things that happened because of the suppression of news was the way you dealt with the Bengal famine. In the beginning no news about the famine appeared at all in the newspapers. People died by thousands daily, but there was no mention of it. It was a most astonishing thing. Ultimately one newspaper of Calcutta broke through the cordon and then the news gradually came through. It is impossible for any newspaper to function properly or to serve the public if this kind of practice is followed.

In England, America and elsewhere newspapers have vast circulations,



but not much direct influence. Sometimes people vote exactly in opposition to what newspapers tell them to do, because they feel that newspapers are not a proper guide. To some extent it is true that a newspaper is influenced by external factors; it may be influenced by its advertising revenue, or even by political parties. But the lesser it is the better.

Ultimately it does not pay to suppress news, because suppression of news inevitably makes people get a false idea of the situation. Suppression of news does not alter facts and when facts come to be known they upset people. Once an impression is created that news is suppressed, people do not believe even the news that is not suppressed and thus even a true report does not carry much weight. So the first essential for this conference is to insist upon complete freedom of news. The Government on its part should give complete freedom to the press and should not impede the growth of a free, fearless and powerful press.

You have to face this problem. It is inevitable in the existing conditions to have to suffer the continuous interference of governmental authority, the desire of this authority to suppress news. I exhort the editors not to be carried away, in giving true and nothing but true news to the public, by any outside influence or governmental authority.

As a politician I am in continuous difficulty. I speak too often and I am sometimes misreported. I do not know what to do about it. I cannot go on issuing contradictions every time. Almost always I speak in Hindustani and they are translated into English by reporters. The odd thing is that reports of my speeches in Urdu and Hindi newspapers are retranslations of these English translations and therefore they lack originality. Sometimes there are terrible distortions and people often draw my attention to them. I am referring specially to absolute misrepresentations and complete fabrications in certain Urdu and Hindi newspapers from which I have sometimes personally suffered. I urge that such a practice should be stopped.

I do think that it is important that a more efficient system of news service should be organised in India. If transmission of news takes place in Hindustani, as it is done now in English, it will increase the efficiency of the Indian language newspapers tremendously. First of all you will not have to sit down and translate everything into English and then retranslate them into Hindi or Urdu. You will get more or less the original report. It will save time and increase efficiency. After all, you must realise that, important as the English newspapers are in India, and no doubt they will play an important part for a considerable time to come, the future of journalism in India lies with the language newspapers. For this reason especially, there is the need for improving these

papers even more than the English newspapers. You have to improve them through such services as I have suggested and through a better type of personnel.

You have been trying to raise the emoluments, allowances, wages and salaries of newspapermen. There is some complaint specially from the language newspapers that the pay scales have not been fixed high enough. With such little experience as I have, I can say that newspapermen are paid badly and in a large number of cases their pay scales are very low.

Personally I think it is always wrong that there should be a big difference between the pay scales of the highest and the lowest employee in any organisation. One of the tests of efficiency should be how little is the difference of income between the man at the top and the man at the bottom. All other differences fade away before this big difference of income. When I look at India I try to compare the difference between the Viceroy's salary and allowances and the income of the peasant. This difference gives me some idea of the Indian social system. I am not prepared to accept that any person is a thousand times better than any other person. Whatever the difference might be in the work the difference in the pay scales should be lessened.

I do appeal to you to consider this — the raising of the standard of the journalists not only in regard to payment, but also in regard to their efficiency. The two should really go together and it is difficult to say which comes first.

Large numbers of workers in newspaper offices, especially in language newspaper offices, are not competent. They are inefficient and do not know their job. This is so because they are not given proper wages. It is a vicious circle which you must break and get competent people by paying adequate wages.

I also feel that the news services in India are not well organised. I remember in my boyhood days I was reading *The Pioneer*, published from Allahabad, from the beginning to the end without ever realising that an Indian lived in India. Now, of course, there is a tremendous difference in the entire presentation of news, but the social scene in India is still not depicted correctly. A great difference exists between the newspapers owned by the Englishmen and those owned by the Indians. I feel that even the latter, as regards the coverage of news, are not rightly balanced. While they devote too much space to national and anti-governmental news they ignore the various social, cultural and economic problems of the masses.

India is fed in respect of foreign news partly by Reuter, which is a news agency, and partly by a few special correspondents and to a slight



extent by some American news agencies. Some years ago when I went to Malaya, there was a new world of news opened out before me. In Singapore I found a flood of American agencies. In Chungking there was a variety of news supplied by an American agency and by Reuter, Tass, Habas, etc. There were all kinds of news from which I could pick and choose. In India one particular agency has the monopoly of news which is unfortunate.

I should like news to come from all sources, but above all I should like your conference and the owners of all newspapers present here to think of starting your own foreign news service. Of course, some of you have correspondents abroad. If a foreign news service is started by you it must be absolutely A-one and quite efficient. An Indian foreign news service should pay particular attention to those aspects which are of interest to India, both from the world standpoint and from our national point of view. It would be difficult for one or two newspapers to organise such a big foreign news service. The burden would be considerable. A number of newspapers could combine for the purpose and appoint their agents. I would like these agents to be posted in some of the important world centres like Washington, London, Paris and Moscow. But I would particularly like them to go to places which are not sufficiently covered by other news agencies.

Whatever the future of India, we are going to have trade, cultural and political contacts with countries in Asia and it is quite likely that questions of common defence may also arise. There is also a possibility of some kind of Asiatic federation. So from every point of view it becomes important that you should develop contacts with Asian countries. There can be no difficulty about funds, if a number of newspapers join together. It would be convenient to start with 20 or 30 centres. But you should have competent men for this job. So I would request you to consider this suggestion and push it through quickly.

We live in such rapidly changing times that it becomes very important for us to keep in touch with the varying aspects of news in South East Asia, the Middle East and the rest of the world.

The quality of advertisements appearing in some newspapers sometimes pains me. I appeal to the editors that they should exercise a stricter censorship over advertisements so that undesirable advertisements are not accepted. Personally I hope that when there is a popular government it will come down with a heavy hand on such advertisements and prohibit them without giving the press any choice in the matter.

You have to decide what you are running a newspaper for. Is it an industry for profit? No newspaper can of course be run unless it is



sound financially. It can suffer loss for some time, it cannot suffer loss for ever. It must be self-supporting at least. Owing to technical developments the cost of running a newspaper efficiently has become great.

In running a newspaper you should think in terms of the freedom of news and the freedom of man. The freedom of India, of course, comes in inevitably for every Indian. I want you especially to think in terms of the common man in India, because this common man in India, with whom I have been hobnobbing so much for the last ten days, has been neglected very much. I feel a sense of shame that it should be so. We have neglected him continuously in our political arguments and squabbles. So I take leave of you with this appeal that you should think about the common man in India.









1. To Frances Gunther<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
April 29, 1938

My dear Frances,

What delightful letters you write — vivid, vital, impertinent, aggressive and intimate. Don't spoil them by excuses and apologies, and don't try to reform. I like them as they are. Having adopted the restrained and sober English university version of the English language as a kind of step-mother tongue, I appreciate all the more the raciness and vitality of your language and feel rather sorry that I am not capable of using it. I suppose you consider my mid-Victorian periods and phrases as just drivel and something B.C. and hopelessly out of date. Probably they are. I might perhaps accustom myself to the use of more racy language. I might learn American slang. I suppose I could get into it soon enough if I spent a few weeks in America or even if I had the good fortune to be with you for a while. But how in hell (observe the progress I am making) am I to get rid of my background of tradition and the thousands of years that cling to me and make me prisoner? What do you, upstarts from a tradition-less country, know of this damnable burden? It is well that you don't. And yet the matter is not so easily disposed of. There is some virtue in tradition even though it may impose upon us loose pyjamas and diaper-like dresses. You talk of artists. Do they grow up to order on any soil? Do not be too hard on the past, bad as it often is. It is for me and the likes of me to curse the past and try to get rid of it for we are its slaves. But you who are more or less free from its evils perhaps miss something that is worthwhile. Have you ever the feeling of age about you — almost of agelessness? Of course not — you are so damned young, living in the present, oblivious of the past, but sometimes dreaming of the future. You are lucky, for that is the only way to live intensively, though perhaps the past gives a certain richness and fullness. But it takes away from absorption in the present, invisible but nonetheless effective bars come in between one and the earthly paradise. One can merely look on.

Very old are we men;  
Our dreams are tales  
Told in dim Eden  
By Eve's nightingales.

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.

Curious this sense of age that comes upon me. People talk of being as old as you feel. What when this body feels young but the mind is old? Ultimately I suppose the body prevails and has its way but the mind can make a nuisance of itself.

There is much truth in your criticisms though some of them are extremely silly. Of course we are incompetent and slow and we waste time over trivialities. And yet it is not so obvious that ceaseless action leads to good results, and efficiency itself might be turned to wrong ends. The efficient nations today are not bright examples of what should be done. Almost one feels that a slowing down of their activity might be good for humanity. Personally I am all for activity and efficiency (even though I sometimes address my envelopes myself) and as an Indian I prefer even wrong action to inaction because we are naturally prone to inertia. But if I was an American I think I would talk less of activity or efficiency and more of the ends in view.

You criticise us for not having supplied you with all manner of facts and figures here as the Government of India did. Perhaps we might have done better. But has it struck you that you might be accused of inefficiency also? Or at any rate a deliberate carelessness in this matter. What did you and John do in India? Apart from a few days in Bombay, you rushed about interviewing Viceroys, Governors, officials, States people and the like. Of course if a wellknown Congressman was sitting on the doorstep, you nodded to him also. If you did not have a measure of sense and a capacity to see under the surface of things, you would have formed an entirely wrong picture of India. As it is I suppose your picture is distorted enough but being friendly and partial to us, you do not allow this to affect your judgment on the important issues. It is curious how you successfully avoided every important Congress function and did not even meet people who were worth meeting. I met you and John casually in Bombay. I had not gone there to meet you but to have tea with Sarojini Naidu & Bebe. It was delightful meeting you both of course but then I did not consider it a business meeting at all. I was looking forward to a real talk some time later in Allahabad or elsewhere. That never came off. You did not come to Haripura which was a great piece of organisation and which would have given you a greater insight into Indian Congress politics than anything else. Evidently you were under the impression that Bombay and Calcutta were the principal centres of Congress activity. Well they are not. They are backwaters.

And so you go away having seen mostly the Indians who surround the Viceregal courts. You would have found a different type elsewhere.



The only real chance you had was in the Frontier Province where you spent a few hours with (me). And that was almost an accidental meeting — a delightful accident which I shall treasure.

You might be interested to know that your friend whom you admire so much, Sir Mirza Ismail of Mysore, has just been indulging in a little wild shooting. Two days ago a crowd of ten thousand villagers who wanted to put up a National Flag were told not to do so and to disperse in five minutes. They refused and therefore they were fired upon and 32 were killed and a large number wounded.

I am pointing out some of your failings just out of spite because you indulge in so much criticism. And yet fundamentally you are right. I was astonished to read John's article in *The Nation*. It was remarkably good. The surprising part was that he had written it soon after arrival in India.

I have written more than I intended to and it is late at night. I am not sure of your address and the prospect of my taking the trouble to write and the letter not reaching you irritates me. I am sending this to Shanghai. Probably you will have left by the time this gets there. I hope it will follow.

I am sailing on June 2nd for Europe. I shall be wandering about there for three months or so — perhaps more. I want to return overland via Russia and Central Asia. Certainly I ought to see more of Asia. The continent fascinates me and I love to look at the map of it. Crowds of memories fill my mind and then — the future! Last summer I went upto Singapore but unfortunately could not go further.

April is here also — not the lovely April afternoon full of golden laughter but an April when the temperature in the shade is 113°F — as it was today. But I am going off for a week to the Himalayas again and I have fixed up a little flying trip over the snows. From there I shall have a glimpse of Tibet on the other side and I shall fill my mind with visions and dreams of what might have been and what yet might be.

Do write to me. I love reading your letters.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

My address in England:  
C/o India League  
165 Strand  
London W.C. 2

## 2. To Frances Gunther<sup>1</sup>

Srinagar (Garhwal)  
(Not Kashmir)  
May 5, 1938

Dear Frances,

I do not quite know why I am writing to you tonight as I have no idea where to send this letter. Probably I shall hang on to it till I return to Allahabad and some bright idea strikes me or some further news of your movements reaches me. The desire to write seized me and I had a little leisure and I have decided to succumb to the temptation.

I am in a mountain valley, not far as the map goes, but effectively cut off from the outside world for lack of communications. We are only 80 miles from the rail head — of this 60 miles can be done by car and 20 on horseback. It is extraordinary how this 20 miles of bridle path comes in the way of outside contacts. For a generation past the people here have been shouting for a motor road but no heed has been paid to them as a road here has no military significance and officials and their like seldom come this way.

This is a beautiful valley in the upper reaches of the Ganges. A little town — in the old days a big town — nestles at the bottom on the banks of the gurgling mountain river. The people are very poor and there are no industries and precious little trade. The world seems to have forged ahead, forgetting it and leaving it to dry up as a backwater. Yet the whole place simply shouts for development. From the mountain rivers and waterfalls any amount of electric power could be produced. Such a place in Europe or America would be bright with charming villas and gardens and would attract hordes of visitors. Here hardly anyone comes and the place has a deserted look and the people, inevitably, are a dull unprogressive lot, though they are sturdy and often good to look at, as mountain people often are. I had a meeting today in the open and as I started the heavens opened their portals and rain came down in torrents. But we carried on merrily although everybody, including a large number of women, were thoroughly soaked.

Why am I writing to you? Because many sentences in your letters provoke me to thought and to reply. And yet your provocation often enough fits in with my own trend of thought. How I envy you the lack of thousands of years of tradition. It is a terrible and crushing burden. I do not think it is all bad but such a lot of it is just decadent putrid

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.



matter. A clean slate to write on — what a joy that would be — And yet nobody has a clean slate — not even you. And when one does have a clean slate after a big and real revolution, curious things get written almost of their own accord. Must revolutions always swallow up their children? With all my admiration for what has been done in Russia, I feel sick and nauseated at recent events there — the numerous trials and executions. You make fun of nonviolence and talk of meeting knavery with greater knavery. Do you really feel that way? I am no pacifist in the ordinary sense of the word and I do think that violence is still necessary in our attempts to re-fashion the world. But violence and knavery are dangerous midwives and they give birth often enough to strange monsters. If violence is, sometimes, not to be avoided, surely knavery must be sat upon at all costs. The means do govern the end and the latest and most painful example is that of Russia. I can't bring myself to believe, now even less than before, that we are entitled to indulge in every objectionable and evil act provided only that our objective is good. By doing so the leadership passes rapidly to those who care little for the objective and are interested only in the evil methods to be pursued.

Logic and reasoning apart, I suppose, each individual's reaction depends far more on his temperament and psychological background. I am too much of an individualist, taking pride in a certain standard of behaviour, to be a success in other types of behaviour even if I indulged in them. So I had better stick to my last and retain a measure of self-respect. But of course this means that I have not the stuff of real leadership (in) me — no man of destiny business. Men of destiny do not try to look at themselves from outside as this is a disconcerting business and it shakes up their faith in the stars! Yet it always surprises me how I, constituted as I am, have succeeded in moving multitudes. You have given me good advice as to how I should behave in public in order to keep it in good humour and develop a legend of greatness for myself. That advice, from all accepted standards, is absolutely right. And yet I have almost always acted contrary to it and by doing so I have actually won their goodwill and affection all the more. I should like you to ponder over that. Without the slightest attempt to do so, or any tricks of the trade, I have attained to an enormous popularity and I gaze at crowds of faces upturned to me with something like the love-light looking out of their shining eyes. Probably I would have failed to achieve this in a western country. I might have achieved a certain eminence but certainly not this popularity. Why is this so? Presumably because I fit in here. And yet this is just what I do not do. I do not fit in,



I am a misfit. And I am horribly conscious of this fact. Because of this I have cared little for the crowd's favours but they have been showered on me against my will. I hide myself and they come to me. I show temper and they take me to their heart. It is true that my temper has never been that of a superior to an inferior; it has never had any contempt in it, only impertinence and irritation at incompetence — My approach to a crowd has always been a friendly one and one of confidence in it. Because of that they have forgiven me much. Do you know what I am often called? *Bharat ka hriday samrat* — Lord of India's heart — a fascinating and pleasing phrase.

You object to Gandhi calling me in a preface to a book just simply 'Jawaharlal'. Well as a matter of fact he always used to address me in public as Pandit so and so. I took strong exception to this — I dislike appellations. It is customary in India, as I think it was in Russia, to refer to people by their personal names and not by their family names. All over India I am known to the peasantry as Jawaharlal or just simply as Jawahar. One of the popular songs is about the brave deeds of Jawahar. Jawaharlal is a fairly common name in India, yet it signifies in popular parlance only me. Nehru is an uncommon name and there are probably not more than three or four scores of Nehrus about, most of them in some way related to me distantly or nearly. Nehru would probably mean me but it might mean some cousin or relative of mine.

I have been writing to you about these trivial matters because I want you to appreciate how backgrounds count and how it is difficult to judge without knowing a particular background. I have somehow developed, unconsciously and unawares, into a person who has a certain intimacy with the crowd. I hate pomposity and because most prominent politicians are pompous in some measure, I was a change to the crowd. They liked this and my very vagaries and odd behaviour attracted them all the more to me. You talk of my pushing through a crowd in Peshawar. That was nothing. My experiences with a crowd would put in the shade the fieriest football scrimmage. I have an uncontrollable habit of going into the thick of a crowd and trying to control it and drill it to some extent. I can't look on when something goes wrong. I must be in it. So innumerable stories of my escapades have grown up and all add to the glamour in the public mind and I must perforce be taken to be as a romantic hero and a bright young man; although as you rightly point out, it is about time that I gave up thinking of myself as such. I do not think of myself as such, I do not act as such. I am not romantic or hero in that sense of the word, and certainly I am sadly conscious of the fact that my bright youth is a thing of the past. But despite me

the Indian people will put me in a line with their heroes of ancient tradition and refuse to take me as I am. What the hell am I to do. I am an iconoclast in many ways but India has a terrible way of taming her wild children.

It is late and I must go to bed now. I have to be up early tomorrow for a long mountain ride to another little town which sits perched up on a hill top.

But I must tell you that two days ago I had a delightful air trip over the mountains right up to the snow barrier between India and Tibet (Tibet is not far from here). We saw some of the sources of the Ganges from the air. And so goodnight to you. You provoke me into talking about myself and so you must put up with it to some extent.

Allahabad — May 9th

I have come back from the mountains to the heat of Allahabad and piles of work await me. Tomorrow I go off to Bombay. There are so many things in your letter which provoke me into writing but I dare not steal the time for it. But one general observation might perhaps help to understand India. India is a feminine country — I do not quite know if that is the correct way to say it. Anyway she has certain feminine virtues and certainly the feminine vices. All such generalisations are of course too vague and sweeping but there is a core of truth in them. And that is why I like India and am bound to her and yet feel intensely irritated at so many things I see. Is that a man's reaction to woman? Our dress and speech and habits generally are inclined to be feminine. Or is it just the climate? But something greater than climate and tradition now attacks India and it is science and industrialisation and the other applications of science and these will undoubtedly win. Why do I wear this absurd and inefficient diaper-like costume? One gets used to anything and I am sufficiently used to it now. But the real reason was and is that it brings me nearer to our masses. Any other dress would set up a barrier. More important things than dress reform have to be achieved first. Perhaps by changing the headgear — as Kamal Pasha did — the stuff inside the head is also changed to some extent. But it is an unstable and risky business and may delay matters in the long run. Remember Amanullah and Afghanistan. Turkey and Persia are tiny countries compared to India and size does make a difference in the approach to a problem. It is a devil of a job to discipline and standardise 350 millions. I think it is remarkable what we have done. True the mud-hut is there. But we have to get rid of the mud-hut



mentality before we build better huts and houses — and we must have the power to do so.

I am surprised at your intense dislike of the Muslims. I think you are unjust to them, though there is some truth in what you say. They have produced many worthwhile things in the past but it does seem to be true that they have exhausted their vital energy and capacity for creative activity. Where they are showing this energy and capacity it is really apart from Islam. They are turning them to pre-Islamic times and partly to modern Europe & America. In India because they are in a minority and are backward educationally and economically they suffer from a terrible inferiority complex. Fear of the future envelopes them. This fear is essentially not of the Hindus, though they may think so, but of modernity and all that this implies to a religion and tradition based on dogma and bigotry. To some extent this fear is present among the Hindus also but it is far less for the Hindu is essentially a pagan in outlook and so inevitably capable of adjusting himself to changing conditions. A leading and highly intelligent Socialist who is a Hindu is a firm believer in a well-known system of Hindu philosophy whose founder lived somewhere in the 8th century. He (the Socialist — Communist) has actually written a book on imperialism in which he has tried to show how the two fit in completely. Personally I am not interested in metaphysics and do not claim to understand even the intricacies of ancient philosophy.

What a problem we have got in India. And yet it will solve itself I have no doubt. If violence comes in, well we shall put up with it. But what is the good of dreaming about violence and bombs and machine guns when we see the bloody hell that they have created in Europe. Is it sensible to expect peace and progress and real communism to emerge out of gangsterism and murder? You cannot get out of it. Men and communities and nations are powerfully affected by the methods they adopt.

But I must stop. I am sending this to Tokyo. I wonder if you will get it. My last letter was sent to Shanghai. Did it reach you?

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru



3. To Frances Gunther<sup>1</sup>

Feb. 4, 1940

Dear Frances,

How delightful you are as a friend, so full of surprises, of welcome gifts, and just the right messages sent at the right moment! Your cable came the other day when I was feeling weary and depressed, and I felt better and happier for it. The two books you sent me were just the books I would have liked. Thurber's<sup>2</sup> *The Last Flower* was a joy and so many have shared that joy with me — including the Mahatma. *I Believe*<sup>3</sup> reminded me of the frantic attempts a year and a half ago of some American publishers to get something of this kind out of me. I was tempted to give in and nearly did so. But the more I thought over it, the more difficult I found the task. What exactly did I believe in? Was I sure I believed in it? Perhaps four or five years ago I would have been more certain and more assured. But that certainty and assurance were no longer there and I wandered in a forest of doubt and hesitation with all manner of new questions and problems assailing me. It was not courage, I think, that was lacking, but sureness of vision. Perhaps that itself is a result of lack of courage. Anyway your message of courage and love was most cheering.

I saw your article<sup>4</sup> in *Life*. As a result of this article I am getting many letters from America which I find difficult to answer. Why do you boom me up so and try to force greatness upon me? And who told you that I go for a periodical sacrificial dip in the Ganges? I do not remember having done so except in my childhood when my mother sometimes took me there. The picture you give was taken at the time of my mother's funeral. But forgive me for being critical about small matters. It was good of you to write that article.

A few days ago I had a visit from Kline, the American A.P. man, and he told me that you had been ill and that John had to hurry back from Europe because of this. I was very sorry to learn of your relapse from health. I hope you have fully recovered.

For the last few days I have been watching the women of India, or

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. James Thurber (1894-1961); American writer and cartoonist.

3. It contained essays by twenty-three thinkers, including E.M. Forster, H.J. Laski, Lin Yutang, Pearl Buck and Ludwig and Thomas Mann, on their personal philosophies.

4. The title of the article was "Nehru, Hope of India".



some of them, in session from a distance. The All India Women's Conference was meeting in Allahabad and the city became quite colourful with their gay attire. They quarrelled a lot among themselves about relatively trivial matters, but on the whole they did remarkably well. They are becoming aggressive. There is a chance of their sending a women's delegation to visit China.

This is written in some haste — forgive the scribble. I hope I shall have good news of you soon —

Yours,  
Jawahar

Just as I had finished writing  
this your letter of Dec. 1st reached me.

#### 4. To Frances Gunther<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
April 7, 1940

A good morning to you also, my dear, and many of them. The mornings are good anyhow, the sun comes out with irritating regularity, the rivers flow on, the fields ripen, flowers bloom, and nature, fascinating and delightful, wicked and callous, carries on regardless of what happens to the innumerable midgets that crawl about the earth's surface. We go our daily rounds till exhaustion seizes us and we fade out, and sometimes the morning is good to us, more often not. But it is good to have messages which cheer and bring pleasant pictures to our minds, and the morning then changes its hue and smiles at us.

Do you know some lines of A.E. Housman:

Yonder see the morning blink:

The sun is up, and so must I,

To wash and dress and eat and drink  
and look at things and talk and think  
and work, and God knows why.

Oh often have I washed and dressed  
and what's to show for all my pain?

Let me lie abed and rest:

Ten thousand times I've done my best  
and all's to do again.

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.

I have spent a few days in a volunteers' camp on the other side of the river Jumna. I used to get up in the early dawn, long before the sun was up, and watch this silver crescent emerge from the darkness and shimmer in the morning light. I have known the Jumna all my life but suddenly I was struck by her attraction and beauty and became her devoted admirer. I like the rivers of India, more especially those of northern India which I know best. I have seen them rushing through deep gorges in the mountains and crossed them by rope bridge which swung up and down over the roaring torrent. I have watched them emerge into the plains below and become majestic streams which give life to those arid plains. The physical beauty impresses me but even more so the song and legend and history that are intertwined with them. The Ganges is Indian history and culture. The Indus is, as its name itself implies, the river of India.

But I am writing to you nonsense, you will say, or at any rate something that is not worth writing about. Perhaps. What exactly is worthwhile? Something that one craves for and cannot reach? Anyway it is good to hear from you, and pleasant to think and write about the thousand and one things that are not so frightfully important, politically or economically. There is our friend the censor, remember, and probably he will think that rivers are a safe subject for American consumption. But even the placid surface of the waters sometimes covers strange currents and unplumbed depths.

So *au revoir* —

Yours,  
Jawahar

## 5. To Frances Gunther<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
Sept. 10, 1940

My dear Frances,

It is good to hear from you, even though sometimes you are far from cheerful. I feel younger and some of your abundant vitality flows into me. Two years, you say, have made you feel a thousand years old. But you will carry the weight of these thousand years lightly and cast it off. What of me who have these centuries in my blood and cannot get rid of

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.



them? The Harrovian in me, whom you dislike, has perhaps helped in preventing me from becoming submerged in these past ages. But they will not be denied, more especially now when death and destruction dominate the world.

I grow curiously detached from life, and yet at the same time life attracts me. The desire to achieve, or perhaps belief in achievement, is far less than it used to be—it is still there of course. Repeated shocks have dulled my sensitiveness and I am prepared to expect almost anything. Life does not seem to be such a valuable thing after all. Most of us make a mess of it anyhow, and even if we try to behave others make the mess. I do not think that death, if it came suddenly, would put me out greatly. The desire of a methodical person to tie up some loose ends before I left for good would be there, little more.

But do not imagine that I am morbid, because I am not. Like you, and possibly much more than you, I have grown rapidly, and the changing of many of the values in life, which seemed so unchangeable, makes a difference.

I am writing about myself, when I ought to write about you. And yet I wrote about myself with a purpose, and not through sheer egotism. Our reactions to events have not been essentially different and I wanted you to feel that. But I am harder than you and so almost unconsciously I take refuge in detachment. Not to do so would lead to madness or worse. Have you heard of King Janaka, a mythical Indian ruler, who is supposed to have (been) the ideal combination of a philosopher and a king? He sought no escape from life and went through its joys and sorrows, but he kept himself above them. It is said of him that he could sit with one hand in a fire and the other on a woman's breast, and neither affected his composure. I am afraid I am very far from being like Janaka, and I am not sure that I would care to be like him. And yet there is something attractive about this detachment in life. It does help when everything seems to go wrong.

Possibly I shall have soon further opportunities to cultivate 'detachment', for we have reached a real crisis. Long before this letter reaches you, I ought to be in prison again. It is five years now since I came out and a fresh discipline is needed. Meanwhile, we grow old and life passes on, which is sad.

Thank you for the picture of Johnny. He is a jolly and attractive boy.  
Love,

Yours,  
Jawahar

6. To Frances Gunther<sup>1</sup>

June 12, 1941

My dear Frances,

When did I write to you last? It seems as if ages have gone by and the earth has grown in size and thrown up new barriers which separate and make even communications by letters or otherwise a difficult undertaking. I did not write to you during all these long months for obvious reasons. Letter writing from jail is not an easy task. But now that I have a chance, I am taking it and sending you these few lines. Write to me sometimes and perhaps the letter might reach me.

Your birthday greetings came to me and the books — or rather two of them. I do not know what happened to Hemingway's new novel, whether it got lost on the high seas or the wide Indian plains. Books take a long time in coming through, if they come at all. The American edition of my book took four and a half months to reach me. I got it only ten days ago.

So far I have only seen two reviews of the book. These are so fulsome that I felt quite puffed up and at the same time rather uncomfortable. I have always the sensation that people mistake me for some one else, or rather they imagine me to be an imaginary creature very different from what I am. What do you take me for? Some astral wraith floating about, even though confined in prison, or a creature of flesh and blood?

No, I have not read a single one of Mahan's<sup>2</sup> books, though I think I dipped into one when I was at Cambridge. Shameful confession. In those far off days of long ago I was attracted by Mahan and I read a good deal about him, but somehow I never came to grips with his books. Now that you recommend him so stoutly, I am making an attempt to get some of his books. Indu has just gone to Calcutta and I have asked her to find them.

My reading just at present is of ancient stuff — Greek plays and old Indian plays. I suppose you do not know much about the latter. There are four good translations. Ranjit Pandit, who is my stable companion here, is translating one<sup>3</sup> now. This was written in the 4th century

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914); naval officer and historian; his works include *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, and *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future*.

3. *Mudrarakshas*.

A.D. and deals with a period soon after Alexander's visit to India — about the 3rd century B.C. Unlike most old and new plays, which deal with the eternal problem of man and woman, this one is a purely political play, dealing with statecraft, war, fifth column activities and the like. One begins to feel that the world has not changed so much after all.

You who have read so much about India and come to very definite (often possibly erroneous!) conclusions, probably give little thought to the past of India. And yet when you deal with countries like China and India you cannot ignore this terribly long cultural continuity which is embedded in the racial consciousness of the peoples of these countries. Modern though you call me, I am fascinated by China's and India's past — culturally speaking — just as I admire old Greece. It is surprising how much there was in common between that Greece and contemporary India. We are supposed to be a religious, philosophical, metaphysical and esoteric people. Perhaps there is some truth in all that but only a fraction of truth. The India of old did not deny life but accepted it and enjoyed it and loved beauty in all its forms in the true pagan fashion. I grow more and more of a pagan.

But jail letters must not be long and must not deal with forbidden topics.

Yes, I wonder when I shall spend a birthday in America and have the advantage of being reminded of it by the American Telephone Service. I shall do it one day. And whether it is my birthday or yours, or no birthday at all, we shall celebrate it anyhow!

Love

Yours,  
Jawahar

## 7. To Frances Gunther<sup>1</sup>

Wardha  
14.6.42

My dear Frances,

You are perfectly justified in using strong language. There are no extenuating circumstances and I plead guilty to the charge. But have you

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.



not often wondered why it is that the letters we want to write are not written and those that have no significance fill our days. For a letter, in order to be worthwhile, must be a bit of oneself, and how can you draw this self out in the storm and hurry of these days? One waits for leisure and the right mood, and one waits in vain. For though moods may vary, and may be good or bad, they are overshadowed by strain and tension and the future that creeps inexorably on and swallows up the present and then itself fades away into the realm of things forgotten.

But the real reason is the outbreak of the war in the Pacific. As this naturally affected communications, America seemed to be further away than ever and sending a letter was an adventure which might or might not succeed. Perhaps I was wrong but the idea of writing to any one in America faded out of my mind. It was bad enough to go through a battery of censors but to wait for months and months for a letter to reach or a reply to come was a sufficient deterrent.

Other things happened eating up my time and preying upon my mind. Life lost such little gaiety as it once possessed and there seemed little chance of its returning, at any rate for a long while. Meanwhile, the burden of years grew upon us.

Recently, since so many Americans descended upon us, I believe a fairly speedy air service functions between India and the U.S.A. But I am not sure if private individuals can take advantage of it.

From time to time little slips of paper, bearing a word or two from you, or pictures or cartoons sent by you, have reached me. I liked them and liked even more the thought of the sender behind them. Yet I would have preferred a letter from you.

What am I to write? There is in a sense a hell of a lot to say and to write. But it must all get so stale by the time this reaches you. And much of it may not reach you at all.

The years just before the war in Europe had a strange effect on me. The whole political stage of Europe seemed trivial — just a puppet show — with badly brought up children quarrelling with and killing each other. This war has confirmed that impression and it amazes me how intelligent people refuse to deal with fundamentals and real causes. Of course the war has to be won and so each party goes on making bigger and noisier bombs and tanks and planes etc. If killing there must be, let us kill by all means, but is that the end of it? It is an odd mad world and I can't get the hang of it. And so, how can I be an effective politician or leader?

When I was in prison and had time to think, I pondered over all this and over India and China and Europe and America. India and

China, with all their innumerable failings and backwardness, went up in my estimation, while Europe seemed all played out and lost in interminable blood feuds. I do not know what the future of Europe or any other part of the world will be but I feel convinced that it will play second fiddle. In spite of its great and undoubted achievements, it has been weighed and tested and found wanting. Even after nearly three years of war it can only think in terms of bombs and the like and little else.

Last month after the Cripps affair and some other distressing business I felt suddenly very weary in mind. The body is well enough and functions satisfactorily but the mind develops more and more the habits of a vagabond. So I ran away to the mountains and spent a few days under the snow-covered Himalayas not far from the Tibetan border. I felt at peace there and recovered somewhat from my mental weariness. Memories of the pagan days of our race came back to me and the mountains were filled with figures of long ago. You see I am a pagan still and these dogmatic creeds of today — religious, political and economic — do not suit me.

I was in the mountains for a week only and now I have come back to reality which somehow seems so artificial. Perhaps out of all this some new reality will emerge, though there are no signs of it yet and the great ones of the earth continue to talk the dead language of yesterday. Is there a tomorrow after all? Or must we live through a long succession of yesterdays?

You cabled to me to come to America. I hope you got my reply. I would love to go there and meet you again. I am sure it would do me good. But I am not a propagandist and I hate this idea of going anywhere as such. Anyway I cannot leave India at present except for a specific job. I cannot go away from India when danger hovers over all of us. I must face that with my people. The fate of India is not going to be decided in London or Washington but here over our wide plains and valleys and mountains. Of course if a real call comes and there is something behind it, I might think of going over. But not for vague talk. I have had too much of this.

All good wishes to you and love

Yours,  
Jawahar

## GLOSSARY

Darogas (Rajasthan)

personal attendants of  
ruling families.

Navjiban

new life





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